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THE ANALYZED BIBLE

BY

G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D.D.

VOLUME I

GENESIS TO ESTHER

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New York : 158 Fifth Avenue
Chicago : 80 Wabash Avenue
Toronto : 25 Richmond St., W.
London : 21 Paternoster Square
Edinburgh : 100 Princes Street

CONTENTS

		PAGE
GENESIS.	THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS .	9
EXODUS.	THE EMERGENCE OF THE NATION	31
LEVITICUS.	THE BOOK OF LAWS . .	53
NUMBERS.	THE BOOK OF WANDERING .	65
DEUTERONOMY.	THE BOOK OF REVIEWS . .	79
JOSHUA.	THE BOOK OF POSSESSION .	91
JUDGES.	DELIVERANCES . . .	103
RUTH.	FAITH AND FAITHLESSNESS .	115
I. SAMUEL.	TRANSITION	125
II. SAMUEL.	THEOCRATIC MONARCHY .	137
I. KINGS.	DISRUPTION	149
II. KINGS.	CORRUPTION	161

		PAGE
I. Chronicles.	The Temple, Desired and Approached . . .	173
II. Chronicles.	The Temple, Possessed and Abandoned . . .	185
Ezra.	A Returning Remnant .	197
Nehemiah.	Consolidation . . .	205
Esther.	God amid the Shadows .	215

INTRODUCTION

IN every direction people are turning anew to the study of the Bible. There are many ways of prosecuting that study. I am not proposing to enter into any discussion concerning the relative values of these different methods. In these volumes I am adopting one, which is most consistently expressed as being the first, and consists in an endeavour to discover the content and message of the Divine Library. This whole method has different processes, from the telescopic to the microscopic. The telescopic is that of taking in large areas at one view, in order to see the relation of part to part and system to system. The microscopic is that of the minute and careful examination of the smallest parts, the study of words, and all that goes to make for detailed accuracy. Between the two extremes there are many grades. All are in turn valuable, and all may be pursued by the Bible student concurrently. The first and fundamental is the telescopic. It is of the utmost importance in the study of any book in the Divine Library to gain primarily a broad and general idea of

the scope and main structure thereof. Until this is done the other methods are not safe, and very much false exposition of individual texts, and of separate sections, is due to the fact that their setting in the whole scheme is not understood. In other words texts should never be studied save in relation to their context.

In the first three volumes of the "Analyzed Bible," the Old and the New Testament are to be passed in general review. The method is to be followed in its simplest process. The subsequent volumes will deal with the books of the Bible more fully, but always in broad outline. The microscopic method is never reached. For that, there are almost innumerable volumes by expert expositors. The present series is not intended to take the place of such, but to serve as an introduction to their use. As the method can hardly be revealed in the volumes themselves, a brief word as to how these results have been reached may be in place. It has been first, that of repeated reading of the books, sometimes as many as fifty times, sometimes of course less, until the general sweep is felt. This has been followed by tabulation, and correction by more careful reading. The issue is an Analysis, or Table of Contents. I do not claim finality for any of

these analyses. I simply give the results of my first line of Bible study during the past twenty years. In the microscopic method some of these analyses have been altered, and more exhaustive study might necessitate still further alterations. No student of the Bible can deal with all its books satisfactorily to himself in a lifetime. The treasures are unsearchable; and those who have spent most time and toil in the fascinating work are most conscious of the vast reaches that stretch away beyond them, luring them on to closer examination and profounder investigation.

So much concerning the writer and his methods. Now a word with my readers as to purpose and method.

As to the first, I am profoundly convinced that one of the gravest perils of this hour of increased interest is that of a merely carnal desire for the technical knowledge of the content of Scripture. Unless those who devote themselves to the study of the Word zealously and ceaselessly watch and pray, the very delight of discovering the system will become a paramount motive, and wherever this is so, it results in disastrous failure, and an actual peril to spiritual life. In these volumes I need hardly say the Bible is to be treated as Divine. It is a volume of the Oracles of God.

If this be recognized it must at once be admitted that they speak to men with purpose, and not merely for amusement, even on highest lines. The use of the word amusement in this connection may shock some people, and yet I employ it advisedly, for I do not hesitate to say that I know of no recreation more full of mental interest than that of a diligent study of any one of these books. Yet the purpose of the whole library is that of so revealing the will of God to man as to lead him into personal conformity thereto. There is no book without some direct teaching. To discover the teaching as a theory merely, without yielding to it personal and immediate obedience, is to familiarize the mind with truth and so to rob it of its power, to the immeasurable harm of the one who does so.

As to the method which will be most helpful to those intending to follow this series, I believe that the first thing should be, before any analysis of mine is looked at, that the book should be read through. I do not think it necessary for me to stay to argue at any length for the possibility of this. I would simply remind my readers that the whole Bible can be read through with ease at the ordinary pulpit rate of public reading in sixty hours. I leave them to make their own calculations upon this

statement as to the time necessary for the reading of any particular book.

Having read the book through, the next process of value will be that of marking out the main divisions as indicated in the analysis, in a Bible specially procured for the purpose. Then let each division be read through separately.

The third and final process should be that of taking each division separately, and marking the sub-sections in the Bible.

Then a word as to the use of these studies. By this I do not mean the use to the reader, but the use the reader is going to make of what he gains. I think that I may best express what I mean by the use of the brief word of advice —Pass it on. This method of Bible study may be profitably followed in the family. It will be found that children in the home are greatly interested in rapidly passing over the Bible with someone who is familiar with these broad outlines. Of course I do not mean to suggest that the children are to be asked to read the book through, but that parents will take them over the books, telling them the content of each. Perhaps in such use, a mere statement of the first divisions of each book by the parent, and committed to memory by the child, would be the best plan. It is perfectly certain that

there is nothing that this age more needs than a return on the part of Christian parents to simple and yet consecutive teaching of the Bible to their own children.

Then these studies may be used again, by gathering small groups of friends together for Bible-marking, and conversation on the basis thereof.

And yet once again, in the more public work of the Christian Church. In Sunday schools, and Bible-classes, and in the regular ministry of the Word by the pastors, nothing could be more interesting than passing the books of the Bible in review by this method of general outline and analysis.

I should like to write a final word concerning the ultimate value of this particular method, that namely, of the discovery thereby of the unity of the Library. If once again a personal word of testimony may be permitted, I may say that it was by the adoption of this method in my own life that the Bible became my own. By that I mean to say that it was my high privilege to be born and trained in a home where the Bible was the supreme Book. From my earliest childhood its stories charmed me, and I grew up firmly believing without question in its divinity. Then came a day of questioning and of doubt, of fear amounting

almost to dread in the presence of much that was being written and said concerning the Scriptures. It was out of a deep sense of perplexity that I turned from books about the Bible to the Bible itself. The result in my own experience has been a discovery of unity which to me is the final proof of Divinity. Beginning with the Old Testament and moving systematically forward, I discovered that each book demanded another, and that when Malachi had been reached, the whole collection demanded more. In other words, I found that step by step I had proceeded through history and through teaching all of which pointed toward a coming One. Then, turning to the New Testament, I found the answer to all the expectation created in the reading of the Old. He, the lonely and perfect Personality of the Gospel narratives, stands at the centre, and all the highways meet in Him. The roads of the books of the Old Testament lead up to Him. The pathways of the New lead out from Him. If Christ is a myth, then the books of the Old Testament have raised questionings and hopes which have never been answered. If the things declared in these books are untrue, then history has produced a Person and an effect answering with absolute accuracy things which never happened. One illustration will suffice.

If man never fell, then the Christ of the Gospels lived and taught and died unnecessarily. That man is consistent who abandons all, rather than he who, professing still to own allegiance to Christ, denies some parts of the whole.

This result of conviction of the unity of the Library cannot be realized save by patient study of its parts. I do not say that it is wrong to believe upon the testimony of others in the Divinity of the whole. To those who are able to do so, the study will confirm their faith. I do however mean to say that those who conscientiously are asking questions in this direction will find an answer best, not by a study of books about the Scriptures, either of a destructive nature or in defence, but by earnest devotion to a study of the Scriptures themselves.

GENESIS

GENESIS—THE BOOK OF BEGINNINGS

A
GENERATION
i., ii.

I. Of the Material to Man **i.—ii. 3**

i. Origin. i. 1
ii. Ruin. i. 2a
iii. The revealed Cosmogony. i. 2b—ii. 3

II. Of Man, as to Nature and Office **ii. 4-25**

i. Created. 4-8
ii. Crowned. 9-15
iii. Conditioned. 16, 17
iv. Completed. 18-25

B
DEGENERATION
iii.—xi.

I. Of the Individual iii.

i. The Serpent and Man. 1-8
ii. Jehovah. 9-24

II. Of the Family iv., v.

i. The first Family. iv.
ii. The Families. v.

III. Of Society vi.

i. Intermixture
ii. Degeneracy

[**Destruction and Deliverance** vii., viii.

New Departure National ix., x.]

IV. Of the Nations xi.

i. Confederacy.
ii. Confusion.
iii. Continuity.
Shem to Abraham.

C
REGENERATION
xii.—l.

I. Of Individuals xii.—xxxv. 21

i. Abraham. xii.—xxv. 10
7 *Communications*

ii. Isaac. xxv. 11—xxvi.
2 *Communications*

iii. Jacob. xxvii.—xxxv. 21
5 *Communications*

II. Of the Family xxxv. 22—xxxviii.

i. The Sons of Jacob. xxxv. 22-29
Generations of Esau. xxxvi.
ii. Joseph. xxxvii.
iii. Judah's corruption. xxxviii.

III. Of Society xxxix.—l. 21

i. History of Joseph
ii. Israel segregated

IV. Of a Nation l. 22-26

Prophecy of faith

GENESIS

THE book of Genesis is the book of origins. It deals with the beginnings of the facts and forces in the midst of which humanity lives, in so far as it is necessary for man to know them in order to set his life in right relationship to them. There is nothing final in this book. Things created are not seen in perfection, but rather as prepared for development. Evil is revealed neither as to its first origin nor ultimate development, but only in the beginnings of its operation in human life. The Divine plan of redemption is not fully unfolded, but the first movements in history toward its outworking are clearly revealed.

The main divisions of the book are marked by the phrases: "In the beginning God" (i. 1), "Now the serpent" (iii. 1), "Now Jehovah" (xii. 1). The first division tells the story of the beginnings of the material universe. The second division gives an account of how evil entered human history, and traces its first movements. The third division gives the history of the calling of a man, the making of a nation, the creation of a testimony, and thus

the preparation for the ultimate coming of a Saviour. These in broad outline are the divisions of the book. The beginnings of created things: Generation, and, at the back of all, God. The beginnings of evil: Degeneration, and, at the back of all, the serpent. The beginnings of the process of restoration: Regeneration, and, at the back of all, Jehovah.

A. Generation

In this first division there are two sections, which give an account respectively of the generation of the material to man, and the generation of man as to nature and office.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In that simple statement we have the Bible declaration of the origin of the material universe; and it is one in which faith finds reasonable foundation. Interpretations of method may vary, but the essential truth abides. In its dignified and sublime statement reason may rest as it cannot possibly do in any theory which leaves God out of the question, and thus finally declares that the first cause was more or less the result of accident, or the existence of laws without mind, or of order without thought.

"And the earth was waste and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep." It

is not possible that these words describe the condition of the heaven and the earth as they were created by God. Between the original creation and the conditions herein described there had been a cataclysm. Of that revelation has given us no account. Speculations are interesting, but they cannot be final or dogmatic. It may be that behind the material cataclysm there was a moral catastrophe. Probably, if we knew all the history, we should know the truth concerning the origination of evil. In subsequent volumes of the Divine Library there are flashes of light which may afford some clue to the hidden things. The fact that Satan is spoken of as "the god of this world," "the prince of this world," may refer to a relationship he bore to the earth prior to the appearance of man. It may be that here angels "kept not their own principality," and that in their fall they involved the earth itself in degradation from its primal perfection, and brought it to the condition described as "waste and void."

With the words "The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" begins the story of reconstruction, and this continues through the third verse of the second chapter. The method of the new birth of the earth was that of the brooding over it of the Spirit, and the

uttering of the Word of God. The earth was born again by the Spirit and the Word. A careful study of this section and of the following one will reveal the fact that two words are made use of to describe the Divine action. The Revised Version has indicated the difference by the use of our words "created" and "made." The Hebrew words of which these are translations do not indicate the same thing. The first, "created," indicates an essential making, a bringing into existence. The second, "made," suggests rather the origination of new forms by the use of things already created. It is of great interest, and moreover of value, to notice the places where the word "created" is used. It occurs first in the declaration concerning the origin of material things. It occurs again at the point where life rises from the non-sensient to the sensient. It occurs, in the third place, at the story of the coming of man. Between these the word used is always "made." This fact reveals that at the points indicated there was a new act of God, introducing an entirely fresh order of being. It is worthy of notice that these words occur exactly where the evolutionary theory has never yet been able to bridge a gulf. The evolutionary process demands a primal fact from which everything goes forward. It cannot supply it.

It is supplied by the declaration "In the beginning God created." It has never been able to discover the link between the nonsensient and sensient; that link is here supplied in the affirmation "God created . . . every living creature." It has never been able finally to discover a link between the highest form of animal life and man; that link is supplied in the affirmation "God created man in His own image." Whereas according to this account He was ever the immanent God, by His own wisdom and power producing every new form of already existing life, He did also at certain periods in the process by direct, essential, new creation, create a crisis from which the order proceeded anew.

There are those who affirm that in the first two chapters we have two distinct accounts of the creation of man; and moreover, some declare that they contradict each other. As a matter of fact the first story places man in his relation to the material universe. He is seen as the crowning work in creation, the last of a succession, whether a succession of separate events or of evolutionary processes is not declared. Whatever the process, he is seen to be the crown of the material creation. In the second story he is shown to be more than this. There an explanation is given of that spirit-

ual quantity which is found in man and in no other creation. It describes the process by which man became different from, and superior to, everything which had preceded him. He was made of the dust of the ground, that is, he had come from the common origin. His creation as man was due to the fact that God breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives. By the possession of God-breathed lives he was differentiated from everything which had preceded him.

This being, at once related to the material universe, and yet kin of God, was placed at the centre of creation, to govern it in co-operation with God. He was to reign over all beneath him. The garden in which he found himself was not the ultimate goal. It was the opportunity for the exercise of the functions of the life bestowed. Within it there lay potentially the city, which man was to build by the cultivation of the forces of the garden, and by exercising authority over creation under the authority of God.

The relation of man to God and Nature was conditioned by a simple and yet perfectly clear command, which indicated the limits of liberty. There were things which he might do. There were bounds beyond which he might not go. His liberty consisted in loyalty to the

law of God. Of these fundamental truths the trees of the garden afforded sacramental symbols. Of all save one he might eat; of this one he might not eat. It stood in the presence of his life, marking the bounds of his freedom.

Man was completed by the bringing to him of one who was of himself, and in whom he found the true complement of his own nature. In man and his companion the likeness of God was complete. "In His own image . . . male and female created He them."

B. Degeneration

The division here commencing deals with the beginnings of that long process of degeneration, in the midst of which the human race still finds itself. The suggested analysis must not be treated as hard and fast in its separation of parts. It is intended simply to indicate the natural development of thought as to the individual, the family, society, the nation. These divisions indicate the true circles of human inter-relationship as they spread out in ever-widening circumference.

Everything commences with the individual. This is a simple story of a man in individual innocence and racial immaturity. Satan appealed to him through a lower form of crea-

tion, here spoken of as the serpent. Spiritual evil took material form to reach spiritual man through the material side of his being. The deepest note in the attack was that of its attempt to reflect on God. The deepest note in the fall was that of failure of faith. Faith being lost, fear immediately succeeded.

Man hid from God, but he could not escape Him. He came first for inquisition, and then for pronouncement of sentence. In the sentences pronounced there is evident the differentiation of strictest justice. The curse was for the originator, justice for the deceived. Side by side with the sentence the first prophetic word broke upon human ears. Behind all the movements of law there abides the heart of love, and this is finally seen in the exclusion of man from the tree of life in order that he might not perpetuate the condition into which he had come as the result of sin.

Following swiftly upon the degradation of the individual came that of the family. The sorrow following upon sin was manifest first in the agony of the heart of the first mother. In hope she bore her first-born, and called him Cain, crying, "I have gotten it," that is, I have gotten the promised seed of the Lord. The hope was doomed to disappointment, and she called her next boy Abel, Vanity, because

of what she had seen in the first. Thus the first family was broken up, and the first gap in the circle of human society was made by murder.

The race moved on, multiplying into families, but the shadow of the issue of sin was on the whole of them, and with one rare exception through fifteen centuries the knell of death was heard unceasingly.

As families multiplied and branched out into many directions, the new relationship of society was created. From the original man two lines proceeded, one through Cain, the other through Seth. These developed around two opposing ideals, the one that of self-consideration and self-advancement, the other that of fear of God, and obedience of Him. The lines of difference became less clearly marked until the sons of the godly race intermixed in marriage with the daughters of the people of the materialized ideals, and the issue was most terrible corruption.

This all ended in a Divine interference of swift and overwhelming judgment. The destruction of the race was not total, for while man had failed, the purpose of God moved forward toward consummation. Out of the devastation a remnant was saved, and human history started forward upon a new basis as

there emerged a new idea of social relationship, that of the nation.

With an immediateness which startles, the book chronicles the story of the failure of the national idea. The will of God was the peopling of the earth by the separation of those delivered from its primal corruption into nations occupying different territories. Against this separation man rebelled by the formation of a godless confederacy, and an attempt to resist the Divine decree. This was followed by immediate Divine intervention, which issued in the confusion of the confederacy. Finally, the line of continuity from Shem to Abram is declared, and the section setting forth degeneration closes.

C. Regeneration

In the third division we have the account of the beginnings of Regeneration, that is, of a movement which culminated in the person of the Messiah. The lines of development correspond to those we have already noticed in the previous division. As there we had first the degeneration of the individual, so here the regeneration of the individual is first dealt with, and indeed, at greatest length. We also see the movement in its application to the family, to society, and toward the nation.

The section dealing with the regeneration of the individual gives us the account of the dealings of God with three men: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. There is a distinct difference between the Divine communications in these three cases. The difference is to be accounted for by the different quality of faith exemplified in each man. To Abraham there were seven communications, each initiating a new movement. His faith was obedient faith. To Isaac there were two Divine communications, and there does not seem to be any personal or direct relation between the communications of God and Isaac's life. The faith of Isaac was passive. To Jacob there were five communications, each of them coming at the close of a movement in the life of the man, by which God arrested and changed the order of his progress. Jacob's faith was restless faith.

The first communication to Abram was of the nature of a call to leave his own country, and to set his face toward a new one, under new conditions of life. "The Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country . . . unto the land that I will show thee." It may be that this initial call was really to Terah. It is certainly declared that Terah moved, taking Abram and Lot with him. The first in-

tention, however, was not immediately realized. Coming to Haran, Terah remained there. After his death, Abram moved on, and came into the land of Canaan.

In the second communication God promised him the land for possession, and he proceeded in faith and obedience.

By the third communication the land was solemnly given to Abram under interesting and remarkable circumstances. The herdsmen of Abram and Lot had quarrelled; and the former, with the magnanimity of a great soul, allowed Lot to make his choice. When he had departed God said to Abram, "Lift up now thine eyes," and thus to the man who was content not to choose, but rather to leave himself free for the following of faith, the whole of the land was given.

In the fourth communication God promised him a seed, which should become a great nation.

In connection with the fifth communication God entered into a solemn covenant as between Himself and Abraham.

The sixth communication was in connection with the actual coming to Abraham of his son.

The seventh and final communication was that by which God finally tested this man in the matter of faith, and because of his obedi-

ence was able to lead him into a closer and more conscious fellowship with Himself.

By these seven communications God led Abraham step by step through more trying circumstances toward higher experiences, and, because he followed, to larger possessions. In the process of the story we find on the part of Abraham deflections from faith. In a time of difficulty he went down into Egypt and by so doing fell, not merely from the simplicity of faith, but from truth. The method, however, is clearly indicated as being a Divine appearing, an obedient answer, and a consequent advancement.

In the story of Isaac we have first of all an account of the pastoral simplicity of his life. In the midst of this quietness there came to him the first of two Divine communications, in which God told him that the covenant made with Abraham was continued to him. The second communication was for the purpose of ratifying this selfsame covenant. Isaac was a man quiet, restful, and passive. His deflections from faith were fewer than those of his father. His restlessness was less than that of his son. There are no actions of magnificent or daring triumph. God never broke in upon his life with the thick darkness or the alarming struggle by Jabbok, but with quiet

messages, showing that he too was included in covenant privilege and purpose. Isaac, the man who dug wells, and lived by them, was necessary in the Divine economy as well as Abraham, the man who blazed the way, and became the pioneer of faith; as well as Jacob, the man of restless activity, who never found final anchorage until he was crippled.

The dealings of God with Jacob were of an entirely different nature because he was an entirely different man. Through all the story it is evident that he was a man who believed in God. That was the deepest fact in his life. He was nevertheless a man of restless activity, and the five communications to him were all for the purpose of checking him, correcting his methods, and keeping him in the pathway of the Divine will.

The first of these culminated a method of duplicity, followed in order to obtain a blessing. By deceit wrought upon his father, under the instigation and with the connivance of his mother, he obtained the blessing which God meant him to have. He believed that it was in the purpose of God for him, but, unable to follow and to wait, by manipulation of events and by the exercise of cunning obtained his father's benediction. As his face was set toward a new country, in consequence of his

duplicity, God appeared to him, and with great tenderness, knowing the deepest in him, bridged the gulf between his material life and the spiritual realities by the vision of the ladder and the angels.

Arrived in the land of Laban, by quick wit and ready resource he won his way to material prosperity against all the meanness of his uncle. There was great danger lest such a man should become satisfied with success in an alien land, and God appeared to him the second time, and commanded him to return.

The self-reliance and independence of Jacob are seen in the method of his return. He made his arrangments with Laban, and built a watch-tower at Mizpah. He then went forward to meet his brother, and so far as possible prepared for every contingency. Then followed the third Divine communication. God set Himself against Jacob's independence, and in the mystery of that long night revealed Himself as the conquering One, Who breaks in order to make, Who cripples in order to crown.

Having come back into the land, immediately he compromised with the circumstances by which he found himself surrounded, with the result that sorrow entered his house in the wake of sin. Again God appeared to him

for purposes of restoration, commanding him to get back to Bethel.

In the last part of this section the faith of Jacob seems to have become obedient, and the fifth communication of God immediately followed.

Subsequently there is an account of another word God spoke to Jacob, but because it was intimately connected with his sons it is omitted in this description of the dealings of God with the man himself.

In this study of the beginnings of the regeneration of the individual the truth is revealed that the one principle through which God is able to operate is that of faith in Himself. Where that is present, even though it may express itself in different ways, according to differing temperaments, He can act. Obedient faith He leads quietly forward; passive faith He visits to comfort and strengthen; restless faith He checks and corrects toward ultimate realization.

Through the sons of Jacob the circle widens and we see the movement toward the regeneration of the family. Two stories run concurrently, that of Joseph and that of Israel. In the history of Joseph we have a further revelation of the method of God with the individual, but grouped around the man are move-

ments that make toward the regeneration of the family, of society, and the nation. The story of Joseph is in some senses the most wonderful of the Old Testament. Considering it from first to last there is less in him of failure, less of faltering than in any other of the Old Testament characters. Around the story of his life are grouped the events which contributed toward the larger application of the regenerative purposes of God. These events, as they contributed to that purpose, were the result of God's overruling. Apart from that, the process of degeneration moved forward hopelessly.

A list of the sons of Jacob, and a table of the generations of Esau are first given. Then follows the story of Joseph, which is immediately succeeded by an account of the terrible corruption of the family in the case of Judah. The connection here is important in that it indicates the beginning of that movement which culminated in the segregation of the nation, by which they were saved for long years from the contaminating influences of the people of Canaan; and purity of family life, and of society, was made possible.

The history of Joseph shows how God overruled all the failure of man for the ultimate good of man. Joseph was exiled from his

father's home by the malice of his brethren, but by the overruling hand of God he was sent into Egypt in order that there he might prepare a place for Israel, that the whole society, which had not yet become a nation, might be brought into circumstances of separation and suffering for their purification. Already, instead of being separate and peculiar, as salt and light in the midst of darkness, they had become corrupted, as the case of Judah proves, and from this corruption it was necessary that they should be delivered. This was accomplished by the overruling of God through the exile of Joseph, the coming of famine, and all those events which issued in their being transferred from Canaan to the land of Goshen, and kept there in separation for centuries. There was nothing more beneficent in the early history of the people than those long years of pain and slavery. Through those years God purged the family and society and so prepared for the nation which was presently to emerge under His wonder-working hand and to enter into possession of the land of His appointment.

In the final verses of the book of Genesis the national idea is seen for a moment as a prophecy and a hope. Joseph, in dying, charged those who were about him that when

presently they should return to their land, they should take his bones and carry them with them. In this charge there is revealed one of the greatest triumphs of faith recorded in the whole book. It is the triumph of a man who believed in God, and in the assured establishment of His people; and he therefore was certain that they must ultimately pass back into their own land. The book closes with the account of the burial of the man who had expressed this faith; and the story of beginnings closes with the phrase, "a coffin in Egypt."

EXODUS

EXODUS—THE EMERGENCE OF THE NATION

A
BONDAGE
i.-v.

I. Israel in Egypt i.

i. Growth of the nation. 1-7

ii. Oppression. 8-22

II. Moses ii.—iv.

i. Birth and Preservation. ii. 1-10

ii. Flight and Residence in Midian. ii. 11-22

iii. His Call. ii. 23—iv. 17

iv. His Obedience. iv. 18-31

III. Israel and Pharaoh v.

i. Moses and Pharaoh. 1-18

ii. Moses and Israel. 19-21

iii. Moses and Jehovah. 22-23

B
DELIVERANCE
vi.-xviii.

I. Jehovah and Moses vi.—vii. 7 The Charge

i. Self-declaration of Jehovah. vi. 1-9

ii. The Charge and Fear. vi. 10-12

(Parenthesis. 13-27)

iii. The Charge and Faith. vi. 28—vii. 7

II. Jehovah and Pharaoh vii. 8—xi. Judgment

i. The Approach. vii. 8-13

ii. First cycle—3 Plagues. vii. 14—viii. 19

iii. Second cycle—3 Plagues. viii. 20—ix. 12

iv. Third cycle—3 Plagues. ix. 13—x. 29

v. Final. xi.

III. Jehovah and Israel xii.—xviii.

i. Deliverance. xii.—xv. 21

ii. Guidance. xv. 22—xviii.

C
ORGANISATION
xix.-xl.

I. Preliminary and Fundamental xix., xx

i. The Purpose. Grace. xix

ii. The Plan. Law. xx

II. Laws. xxi.—xxiii

i. Of the Person. xxi. 1.-3

ii. Of Property. xxi. 33—xxii. 1

iii. Of the State. xxii. 16—xxiii. 1

iv. The Angel Promised. xxiii. 20-3

III. The System of Worship xxiv.—xl

i. Instruction and Equipment. xxiv.—xxx

ii. Interlude. The People's Sin. xxxii—xxxiv

iii. Construction and Consecration. xxxv.—x

EXODUS

THE book of Exodus is a continuation of the story told in the latter part of the book of Genesis. In Exodus nothing is commenced and nothing is finished. It is a link in the chain of the story of God's dealings with the human race. For the sake of linking the subject to that which has gone before, let it be remembered that the book of Genesis was divided into three parts: first, Generation; secondly, Degeneration; thirdly, Regeneration.

In considering Regeneration we saw the work proceeding with regard to the individual, the family, and society. The last note in Genesis indicated the line of the regeneration of the nation.

We now turn to Exodus. The word "Now," with which the first chapter commences, may with perfect accuracy be translated "And." It is a word marking continuity. If we take the book of Genesis away, the book of Exodus becomes meaningless. All the history in Exodus depends upon that in Genesis. We left the children of Israel a people without a

national consciousness, or organisation. We are now to study the account of the emergence of the nation.

There are three clearly defined divisions in the book: Bondage, Deliverance, and Organization.

A. Bondage

Segregated from the corrupting influences of the land of Canaan, the children of Israel rapidly multiplied in the land of Goshen.

This very growth became a menace to Egypt, and from the standpoint of political expediency Pharaoh was justified in resorting to extreme measures to check it. High enthroned over Pharaoh, Jehovah permitted His people to pass through the long period of oppression and suffering, and so stiffened the national fibre, and thereby made the people strong for the campaigns of the future.

As the appointed time for deliverance approached, the instrument of God was found and prepared. The story of Moses occupies the next section. His preservation presents a wonderfully human picture as it manifests the sweet art of mother-love. The inspiration of love's activity was, as we learn from the New Testament, that of faith.

Jehovah's overruling of circumstances

toward the accomplishment of His purpose is seen in the coming of Pharaoh's daughter. The history of the human race has been affected by the fact that on a given day a baby cried into the face of a woman. The baby found its way into the woman's heart, and the woman carried the baby into the heart of Egypt's power. There the future leader of Israel received his education, and the first part of the preparation necessary for the work that lay before him.

Forty years passed away, and the child, having become a man, turned his back upon the court of Egypt, and upon all its splendours. His flight was also under the government of God. If he had attempted to deliver Israel at forty years of age, he would have failed. The man, cultured and refined, with all the learning of his time, passed to the next period of his preparation in the majestic loneliness of the Sinaitic peninsula. It was change from lesser to greater grandeur. The solitude of the mountains, under the golden light of sun by day and the stately solemnity of stars by night, is more full of majesty than all the glitter of an earthly court. There Moses was a shepherd, and so received the next part of his preparation for leadership.

Then follows the account of his direct call

and commission. In it Jehovah had to meet and deal with the difficulties of Moses' fear. The victory was with God, and Moses turned his back this time upon the loneliness of the wilderness, and set his face toward the court of Pharaoh.

B. Deliverance

In this division Jehovah emerges from the shadows into clear light, and becomes the centre of supreme interest. He is seen dealing with Moses by way of preparation, with Pharaoh in judgment, and with His people in deliverance and guidance.

In the first section we have the account of the answer which Jehovah gave to the complaint of His servant when he was discouraged at his first reception both by Pharaoh and his own people.

This answer consisted in the first place of a great Self-declaration. In the course of it the words "I am Jehovah" are used four times, and surrounding these declarations are affirmations concerning the Divine activity. "I appeared . . . I was not known . . . I have established my covenant . . . I have heard the groaning . . . I have remembered My Covenant . . . I will bring you out . . . I will rid you out . . .

I will redeem you . . . I will take you to Me . . . I will be to you a God . . . I will bring you in . . . I will give it you." The value of this declaration may be gathered by a recognition of the difficulty of the position which Moses occupied. The man who had been brought up in the court of Egypt had returned to declare the authority of another Potentate, an unseen King. He had been treated with contempt by Pharaoh. The very people he had come to deliver had refused to hear him. He had returned to God with his complaint, and the method of the Divine dealing with him was that of unveiling before Him His own glory. Moses was never afraid again. There were other failures, but no dread of God was manifest from that moment to the end. He had seen a new vision of Him, and doubted His power no more.

And yet fear was immediately manifest, but it was fear of himself. It was difficult to believe that he could be the instrument of such a God. This new fear Jehovah answered by assuring His servant that his strength before Pharaoh would not be that of his own eloquence or power, but rather that of Divine preparation and equipment. Then faith triumphed over fear, and Moses went forward to the work appointed him.

The next section reveals Jehovah dealing with Pharaoh in judgment. That judgment moves in three cycles, in each of which three plagues demonstrate the power of God. These all failing to bring the heart of Pharaoh into willing submission, a fourth and final judgment fell upon him.

In the story of this process of judgment it is necessary to draw a most careful distinction between Pharaoh's hardening of his own heart and God's hardening of his heart. This is one of the great passages in Scripture in which the Authorized Version is apt to mislead. There, throughout the account, it is declared that the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh. The Hebrew text does not warrant any such translation. As a matter of fact, it is never stated that Jehovah hardened Pharaoh's heart until the end of the second cycle of plagues.

Moreover, two different words are made use of, although both are translated "hardened." One of these means to make strong or courageous. The other means to make stubborn. It is declared from the beginning that God made his heart strong or courageous, thus setting him absolutely free for the unfearing exercise of his own will. It is never declared that God made his heart stubborn until it had

been five times affirmed that he hardened his own heart.

There is a moment when God does that with a man. There is no Bible warrant for teaching that a man will be able, whensoever he chooses, throughout the ages, to turn back to God. Every man has his own probation, and his own opportunity, and the Judge of all the earth holds the balances with infinite precision. Whosoever stubbornly refuses to submit himself to God in the day of opportunity, and that repeatedly, finds at last that his own decision has become his destiny. By the outworking of law God seals the choice of the human will.

In this whole process of judgment the patience of God is as clearly manifest as is His power. In spite of persistent lying and deceit by Pharaoh in the promises made to Moses, God patiently waited. It was not until he had repeated opportunities of yielding himself to the Power Who was manifesting Himself that, by the will and decision and act of God, the stubbornness he had cultivated became such that he could not escape therefrom.

The final section in this division is occupied with the account of the actual deliverance of these people, and the commencement of that

wonderful guidance which included provision for all their need, and power for all their weakness.

Judgment is seen in its purpose as it merges into deliverance. As they moved on toward the realization of their nationality, the very calendar was altered, and there dawned for them a new year, and a new order began. Before the march to liberty they observed the religious rite of Passover. This rite was called an ordinance, a feast, a sacrifice. It was wholly an ordinance to be observed. It was essentially a feast of rejoicing or deliverance. It was fundamentally a sacrifice perpetuating the memory of vital and essential truths. The night of the exodus was indeed, as the historian declares, "a night to be much observed." The people passed from slavery to liberty, from the lash of oppression to the place of power, from degradation to the realization of national life.

Immediately the nation, delivered and consecrated, is seen under the direct government and guidance of God. "God led them not by the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near." "God led the people about."

The first march after that from Egypt was back into a place of danger. The definite meaning of that march was declared to Moses. The just judgment of the sin of Pharaoh must

be carried out to its last degree, but it must also be carried out in such a way as to make evident its justice. Was ever the madness and blindness of sin persisted in, more manifest than in the proud preparation of chariots and armies to overthrow and destroy a people for whom God had so wondrously wrought?

No comment is necessary on a story so full of life and colour and dramatic power as that of the crossing of the sea. In the silent hush of the march through the solemn night there was revealed to the people the fact that, under Divine government, there are no obstacles which cannot be overcome. In fatuous rebellion Pharaoh and his host attempted to walk by the pathway specially prepared for the men of faith. With the morning watch God manifested Himself in some way to the Egyptians. He "looked forth upon the hosts through the pillar of fire and of cloud." There then dawned upon them the consciousness of their folly, and they attempted flight. It was too late. Their doom was sealed, and with the hand of Moses outstretched by Divine authority, the sea broke over them in rushing waves of destruction, and the power of the mighty people that had oppressed God's nation in spite of every opportunity for repentance was broken forever. It was a great and glorious

song that rose upon the morning air on the far side of the sea.

There now commences the more direct story of the guidance of the people by Jehovah. Marah afforded an opportunity for the discovery of the resources of God. Elim was an evidence of His tender care for them. As they passed into the wilderness they began to be conscious of the scarcity of some of the things which they had possessed, even in the midst of Egyptian slavery. Again the resources of their God were proved as He supplied them with manna and with meat. Again their faith was tried by lack of water, and notwithstanding their murmuring against Moses, God was proved to be the God of patience.

The march of the people brought down upon them the army of Amalek. Perfect victory was gained by Israel, and in the first battles the principles of their perpetual conflict were revealed. They won by a combination of fighting and faith, a union of practice with prayer.

This division ends with the story of Jethro. His advice to Moses was reverent in its recognition of the Divine authority, "If thou shalt do this thing, and God command thee so." The fact that Moses acted on his advice is almost certain evidence that he recognized that God was speaking to him through this man.

C. Organization

The people of Israel, delivered from bondage, were still a promiscuous multitude rather than an organized nation. In this division we have an account of the giving of the constitution, and of the great work of organization. It is divided into three sections, dealing with matters preliminary and fundamental, the moral code, and the established system of worship.

The Divine purpose of grace was first declared. The people were to be His "peculiar possession . . . a kingdom of priests . . . a holy nation." They were not yet prepared for the fulfilment of so great an intention, and their unpreparedness was manifest in their ready declaration that they would keep all the words of Jehovah. Immediately the new method, necessary in view of their condition of mind, was commenced. They were brought face to face with the supreme fact of the majesty of God. The law was given amid the accompaniments of thunders, voices, fire, and smoke. All of this was symbolic of the majesty and holiness of God. By special covenant He had brought the people near to Himself. It was a nearness characterized by untold blessing. Yet they must be reminded of the

majesty of their King, and so be filled with reverence for Him.

The ten words of the moral law were preceded by a proclamation of God concerning Himself, first as to His name, "I am Jehovah"; secondly, as to His relation to them, "thy God"; and, thirdly, as to His deliverance of them from bondage. The Decalogue consisted of two parts. The first four commandments constituted the first, and governed the relationship existing between God and man. The last six constituted the second, and conditioned human inter-relationships. These ten words revealed a philosophy of life as well as a law. The true morality was to be learned from this philosophy. Man's first business is with God. His every other relation depends upon that, and will be created by it.

The effect produced upon the people by the uttering of these words was that they were filled with fear. The nearness of God became a terrible thing as they understood His holiness through the spoken words. Their fear was due to ignorance as surely as was their presumption. The Divine answer was full of grace. They were charged to have no other God, and a way of approach to God was at once provided. It was the way of the altar, and of sacrifice. These earliest instructions

concerning the altar were deeply significant. It was to be constructed of simple and unmade things, devoid of any workmanship in which the heart of man might make its boast.

Then followed the laws which were to govern the new nation as a state. These had first to do with the person. The relation of slaves to their masters was dealt with, and they were of such a nature that wherever they were obeyed they led ultimately to emancipation.

The sacredness of life was safeguarded by the enactment that any man taking the life of another was to forfeit his own. If the act was premeditated there was to be no escape. Injury or death wrought by cattle on men and women, and also on cattle, was to be punished and compensated. The laws of property were such as to make it patent that no man was to imagine that when he had fulfilled certain direct obligations to God he might live his life without reference to his neighbour. Wrong inflicted by neighbour on neighbour in the material realm was accounted sin against God in the moral realm.

These requirements were characterized by the most careful adjustment of relation between man and man, and revealed the intimate relation of God to all, and His remarkable

interest in every phase and department of human life.

There followed a group of laws promiscuously stated, yet all having to do with the bonds which strengthened the state. In two of them sins of unchastity were dealt with. Passion was penalized, in the more natural expression by stern social requirement, and in the more unnatural by death. A blunt, stern word, "Thou shalt not suffer a sorceress to live," revealed how harmful, according to the mind of God, were all attempts to traffic in secret and hidden things. Laws affecting the lending of money and the receiving of pledges followed, and finally such as conditioned the administration of justice.

In this connection the feasts of the Lord were placed in their true relation to the social life of the people. The sabbatic year was arranged in order that the poor might eat. The rest of the Sabbath was revealed to be a provision of tender care for cattle and servants also, who were included in its intention. This section ends with a gracious promise which Jehovah made to His people of that Presence which should lead and guide them in all the days to come. A study of the subject of this Presence will show that the Person referred to was the Angel-Jehovah.

The third section deals at length and in detail with the preparation for the true worship which followed upon the promise of the Angel Presence, and the warning against false worship. There was a preliminary solemn assembly of the elders of Israel in the presence of God. Perhaps there is nothing more august in the whole book than this account of the approach of the elders. We are told "they saw the God of Israel." No description is given of what they saw. It may be that Jehovah manifested Himself to them in that Angel Presence which He had promised. It is better, however, to leave the statement as it stands, remembering that it can only be interpreted by the facts which followed, namely that Moses went into yet closer communion with God almost immediately afterwards. The vision was characterized for the elders by immunity from judgment, for upon them "He laid not His hand"; and, moreover, by a sacred act of communion in which they "did eat and drink." Finally, Moses was called beyond the people in the valley, and beyond that more select circle of the elders, into the very midst of the mount, where he received in yet fuller detail the law which was to govern them, and saw the heavenly things, and so learned the pattern of the earthly worship.

In examining the structure of the Tabernacle, it will be well to endeavour to understand what it meant to the people for whom it was provided. That detailed study is not within the compass of our present work. We notice now merely the general method of procedure. The first instructions were not concerning the building itself, but concerning its contents. They began at the very centre with the ark, which symbolized the fact of the presence of God, and the right of the people to approach Him as their King. Next in order the table of shewbread was described. Two ideas were suggested by this table. To the Eastern mind a table was always a symbol of fellowship and of hospitality. Thus the nation was reminded of the privilege of fellowship with God, and of the fact of a friendship which expressed itself in hospitality. The golden lampstand was the symbol and the figure of the testimony which these people were to bear to the outside world. The curtains and coverings of tabernacle and tent were made of materials which suggested the conditions among which God could make His dwelling-place. The boards and bars, set up in sockets of silver, spoke, in the symbolism of the time, of the standing of these people as a redeemed nation before God. The veil and the screen indicated

at once the exclusion of the people from nearness, and yet the way of their approach through mediation. The veil of the outer court, the brazen altar, and all its fittings, reminded them of the life of devotion, based on sacrifice, which they were called to live. The gorgeous robes of the priest are seen to be in common with everything else, full of symbolic teaching. The ceremony of the priests' consecration is described, as is also the altar of incense, and the arrangements for placing the whole of the furniture within the sacred enclosure.

Instructions followed as to the gathering of the half-shekels from the people, which were to be used in the construction of the foundation sockets; and also as to the preparation of the holy oil to be used in anointing.

The final words of instruction were those of a promise, full of grace and tenderness, that equipment should be granted to certain men which would enable them to do the work necessary for the construction of the tabernacle.

While the lawgiver was yet in the mount receiving this pattern of heavenly things in order to earthly worship, the people in the valley had fallen into grievous sin. This making of the golden calf consisted of a positive violation of the promise they had made to keep the

words of the law. When they said, "Up, make us Elohim," it was not that they desired to substitute other gods for the One God, but rather they sought a similitude of God. Their choice of a calf was in itself significant. In Eastern symbolism the ox was ever the type of sacrifice and service, and they had at least some glimmering of the truth concerning the Divine attitude. It is also to be observed that, the day after the calf was erected, they observed a feast to Jehovah. The evil of their action was seen in the attitude of mind produced in them by their creation of a symbol. They "sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." Worship at once became materialized and sensual.

Moses is manifested in all the grandeur of his character in this connection. His pleading with God was not so much on behalf of the people as on behalf of God. He was swayed by an infinite pity for them, but at the back of the pity, and burning through it like a fire, was a passion for the honour of God. Having stood before God for the people, he came to stand before the people for God. In hot anger he broke the tables of stone, and seizing the calf, ground it to powder, and compelled the men who made it to drink of the water into which it was flung. He then proceeded to the

ceremony of mediation and restoration, and passed back into the mount. We have no detailed account of the happenings of the second period save that the tables of the law were written anew. During this second absence the people waited patiently until Moses returned, his face shining with the glory of the awful and solemn fellowship of the mount.

The final movement of the book tells the story of the construction and consecration of the Tabernacle. A willing people offered of their substance until there was "much more" than enough. Then, by the hands of specially equipped workmen, the work went speedily forward until all was completed according to the Divine pattern. This is declared in the general statement "thus did Moses; according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he." Finally it is recorded, "so Moses finished the work." Everything was completed according to the Divine pattern, and in the Divine order.

Everything symbolized the real presence of Jehovah, and that fact was made living in the consciousness of the people when the glory of Jehovah filled the completed place of worship. So great was the glory that Moses was not able to enter the Tent of meeting.

Thus the nation was organized around the

presence and power of Jehovah, and the chronicle closes with the simple statement that they went onward in their journeyings guided ever by the presence of God manifested in connection with this centre of their life and worship.

LEVITICUS

LEVITICUS—THE BOOK OF LAWS

A DEDICATION *The Offerings* *i.-vii.*	B MEDIATION *The Priests* *viii.-x.*	C SEPARATION *The People* *xi.-xxii.*	D CONSECRATION *The Feasts* *xxiii.-xxiv.*	E RATIFICATIO *The Signs* *xxv.-xxvii.*
Provision for Approach	*Appropriation of Provision*	*Conditions of Appropriation*	*Benefits of Approach*	*Symbols of Relation*
I. The Offerings i.-vi. 7 **The Worship** i. Burnt Offering. i. ii. Meal Offering. ii. iii. Peace Offering. iii. iv. Sin Offering. iv. v. Trespass Offering. v.-vi. 7	**I. Consecration of the Priests viii.** i. Preparation. 1-9 ii. Anointing. 10-24 iii. Sacrifice and New Anointing. 25-36	**I. A People God-governed xi.-xvii.** i. Of Health. xi.-xv. ii. The Day of Atonement. xvi. iii. General Instructions concerning Sacrifices. xvii.	**I. The Feasts xxiii.** i. The Sabbath. 1-3 ii. The Passover. 4-5 iii. Unleavened Bread. 6-8 iv. First-fruits. 9-14 v. Pentecost. 15-22 vi. Trumpets. 23-25 vii. Atonement. 26-32 viii. Tabernacles. 33-44	**I. Obligator xxv.-xx** i. The Land Sa bath. xxv. ii. Jubilee. xxv. 8- iii. Exhortations xx
II. The Laws of the Offerings vi. 8-vii. **The Worshipper**	**II. The Priests at Work ix.** i. Offerings for Themselves. 1-14 ii. Offerings for the People. 15-24	**II. A People God-manifesting xviii.-xxii.** i. Separation from Evil Practices. xviii. ii. A Call to Holiness xix. iii. Laws against Unchastity and Uncleanness. xx. iv. Responsibilities of the Priests. xxi., xxii.	**II. Symbols of Consecration xxiv. 1-9** i. The Oil. 1-4 ii. The Shew-bread. 5-9	**II. Voluntar xxv** **Vows**
	III. Nadab and Abihu x. i. Their Sin. 1-7 ii. Consequent Warnings. 8-20		**III. The Blasphemer xxiv. 10-23**	

LEVITICUS

THIS is a book of laws. It has been aptly called the handbook of the priests. Its Hebrew title, Vayyikra, which means "And He called," is the first phrase of the book itself. The first verse indicates the character of what follows. The moral law had been given from amid the splendours of the mountain. The laws regulating worship were spoken from the tent. Thus the content of the book is linked to the subjects dealt with in Exodus, and is in direct continuation thereof.

The nation had been brought out of bondage and organized. At the very centre of its life was a provision for worship in the Tabernacle. The whole outlook of Exodus teaches the supreme place of worship in the life of the nation. It, moreover, reveals the fact that there can only be worship through propitiation, because man is a sinner. The fact of sin thus underlies all now to be considered. The fact of redemption in the purpose and economy of God is seen overshadowing the fact of sin and making worship possible. The laws enunciated here have to do with these matters of supreme importance.

The book falls into five parts. First, the setting forth of the Provision for Approach (i.-vii.). Secondly, the Institution of the Priesthood through which the Provision might be appropriated (viii.-x.). Thirdly, the Life of Separation, which is the condition of Appropriation (xi.-xxii.). Fourthly, the Feasts, which portrayed the Benefits of Approach (xxiii.-xxiv.). Lastly, Symbols of Relation which safeguarded the maintenance of the right of Approach (xxv.-xxviii.).

A. Dedication: the Offerings

In this division there is revealed the provision of God for the approach of His people to Himself in worship. The offerings are first described, and then their laws are enunciated.

As to the offerings, five were needed to perfectly unfold the meaning and method of personal dedication. The first was the burnt offering, which suggested the need for perfect dedication. The lamb without blemish consumed by fire indicated the necessity of a dedication perfect in quality and quantity. The meal offering was the work of men's hands, of the fruits of the ground, the result of cultivation, manufacture, and preparation, suggesting that dedication necessitated the offering

of a perfect service as well as a perfect life. Of the peace offering, part was burned by fire and part consumed by the worshipper. It was the symbol of communion. In the white light of the Divine holiness, sin is sin, whether it be wilful or not; and the sin offering was provided to teach that the failure of those dedicated to God must yet be dealt with on the basis of sacrifice. The trespass offering was provided for definite acts of wrong-doing. Trespass in this connection is more than a mere missing of the mark. It includes the thought of positive and wilful wrongdoing.

The Divine provision for worship having been revealed in the offerings, there followed instructions concerning the method of offering, which revealed the true attitude of the worshipper. In connection with each there were detailed instructions which are full of suggestiveness. The ceremonial was Divinely arranged, and nothing was frivolous or unnecessary. Every detail had signification, and was intended to impress upon the mind of the worshipper truths which were of vital importance, in order that he should recognize the solemn nature of his dedication as a member of the nation whose greatness consisted in its intimate relation to Jehovah.

B. Mediation: The Priests

The second division of the book deals with the laws of mediation. It consists of a brief historical portion, which gives an account of the actual ceremony of the consecration of the priests and the tabernacle, and the commencement of worship; and so sets forth God's provision for the approach of His people to Himself through mediation on the basis of sacrifice. In the midst of a solemn assembly the priests were washed, and Aaron was arrayed in the garments of his sacred office. The holy rites of consecration then moved forward. The ceremonies were repeated daily for seven days.

This account of the consecration of the priests is immediately followed by that of the commencement of their work. The people were first gathered together, bringing with them offerings according to the instructions given. While they stood in solemn stillness in the presence of Jehovah, Aaron, in full official capacity, commenced his work. His first act was that of presenting the sin offering and the burnt offering for himself. Then followed immediately his first acts on behalf of the people. First the sin offering, indicating the necessity for expiation of sin; next the burnt

offering, indicating the devotion of the whole life to God; following that the meal offering, speaking of the devotion of work and service; finally the peace offering, the symbol of communion. Thus the values of the offerings of approach could only be appropriated through the mediation of the priests.

At the commencement of the history of the official work of the priesthood there were evidences of failure. Nadab and Abihu, two sons of Aaron, offered strange fire before the Lord, and were swiftly slain by fire. Strangely solemn were the words: "Aaron held his peace." They were his own sons, but his relation to God was superior to his relation to them, and the only attitude becoming to him was that of submissive silence. The other priests were solemnly charged to show no signs of mourning, and to abide at their posts.

c. Separation: The People

While provision for approach was made, and the method of appropriation was provided, there were still very definite conditions which must be fulfilled in order that the people might avail themselves of the provision made. These conditions may be summarized as those of entire separation to God. They were to be a people God-governed and God-manifesting.

The Divine government must be recognized and obeyed in the matter of health. Minute regulations were given as to food, as to childbirth, as to leprosy, and as to all uncleanness. In the midst of this section instructions were given for the observance of the great Day of Atonement, which was perhaps the most important religious rite of the whole year in the Hebrew economy. It was the day on which the high priest entered into the holy place, all the arrangements for which entry were given in detail. In the ceremonial of this day provision was made for dealing with the whole question of sin, known and unknown. Most particular instructions were given as to the attitude of the people on the great day. They were to rest and afflict their souls. It was to be a day of solemn fasting and humiliation in which they reminded themselves of the fact of their sin, of the provision made for their cleansing, and of their consequent right of approach to God in worship. Strict instructions were next given concerning sacrifices.

The laws of separation then assumed a slightly altered character. So far the principal note had been that of the fundamental matters of relationship to God. The habits of the life of separation are more particularly dealt with. The people were distinctly forbid-

den to conform to the doings either of Egypt or Canaan.

Then followed a repetition of laws already given, with one reiterated emphasis: "Ye shall be holy, for I, the Lord your God am holy." No less than fourteen times in the course of one chapter (xix.) does the solemn declaration "I am Jehovah" occur. Yet further laws concerning unchastity and uncleanliness were repeated, and the death penalty was associated with certain forms of disobedience.

The final section in this division deals with the responsibilities of the priest. Standing, as he ever did, in a place of special nearness to God as the appointed mediator of the people, he must of all men manifest in the externals of life and conduct that holiness without which no man can see the Lord.

D. Consecration: The Feasts

The feasts of Jehovah were the national signs and symbols of the fact that the people, dedicated to God as the offerings witnessed, permitted to approach through the mediation of the priestly service, separated in all the details of life, were by God consecrated to Himself.

The foremost place was given to the Sabbath. It was a perpetually recurring feast, to

be observed throughout all the year, on every seventh day.

Following this we have the appointment of the set feasts in their relation to times and seasons and the passing of the year. Thus all time-measurements were related to eternal truth. The first feast was the Passover, which merged into that of unleavened bread. With these the year commenced. The Feast of First-fruits was appointed for the land into which God would bring them. Marking the beginning of possession, it served as a constant reminder of the truth that all they had was the result of His giving rather than of their getting.

After a lapse of seven full weeks, during which the whole harvest was gathered, the Feast of Harvest was observed, and Pentecost reminded them that all they needed was provided by Jehovah. The seventh month was the most sacred of all. Therein two great ordinances were observed: the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Preceding these, and preparing for them, came the Feast of Trumpets. This was held on the first day of the month. Its characteristic notes were rest, and proclamation of the will of God. The tenth day of the month was the great Day of Atonement, which has already been described. The last Feast of the year was that of

Tabernacles. It was observed after all the work was completed, and the results thereof gathered. For seven days the people dwelt in booths, and heard the reading of the law. The section ends with instructions concerning the symbols of consecration, those namely of the oil and the shewbread.

E. Ratification: The Signs

The laws of ratification consisted of the outward signs of the principle of possession to be observed in the land, together with solemn promises and warnings. The first sign was of the Sabbath of the land. In the seventh year of rest the original Ownership of God was recognized. The second sign was that of the jubilee, wherein great human inter-relationships, dependent upon the fact of Divine possesson, were insisted upon.

The laws of the year of jubilee affected the land, dwelling-houses, and persons. In these the foundations of the social order were firmly laid. All inter-human relationships, both of person and property, were conditioned in the fundamental relationship of the people to God.

The book ends with a section dealing with vows. The principle laid down is that it is not necessary that vows should be made, but that if they are made they must be religiously observed.

NUMBERS

NUMBERS—THE BOOK OF WANDERING

A
ON THE MARGIN OF THE LAND
i.—x.

I. The Order of the Camp i.—iv.
- i. The Census. i.
- ii. The Encampment. ii.
- iii. The Levites. iii., iv.

II. The Purity of the Camp v., vi.
- i. Purification from Pollution. v.
- ii. Special Dedication. vi.

III. The Worship of the Camp vii.-ix. 14
- i. Offerings of the Princes. vii.
- ii. Order of Worship. viii.
- iii. Passover and Purification. ix. 1-14

IV. The Movement of the Camp ix. 15—x.
- i. Determined by the Cloud. ix. 15-23
- ii. The Method of Summons, and Order of March. x.

B
EXCLUSION AND WANDERING
xi.—xxv.

I. Discontent xi., xii.
- i. Against God The People. xi. 1-3
- ii. Against Circumstances xi. 4-35
  The Mixed Multitude.
- iii. Against Moses Miriam and Aaron. xii.

II. Disaster xiii., xiv.
- i. Fear. Sending of Spies. xiii.
- ii. Rebellion. xiv. 1-35
- iii. Presumption. xiv. 36-45

III. Discipline xv.—xxv.
- i. Domestic. xv.—xx. 13
  - *a.* The Sabbath-breaker. xv.
  - *b.* Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. xvi.
  - *c.* Laws. xvii.-xix.
  - *d.* Death of Miriam. xx. 1
  - *e.* Failure of Moses and Aaron. xx. 2-13
- ii. Foreign. xx. 14—xxv.
  - *a.* Edom. xx. 14-21
  - *b.* Death of Aaron. xx. 22-29
  - *c.* Victory over Canaanites. xxi. 1-3
  - *d.* Murmuring. xxi. 4-9
  - *e.* Sihon and Og. xxi. 1-35
  - *f.* Balaam. xxii.—xxv.

C
ON THE MARGIN OF THE LAND
xxvi.—xxxvi.

I. The Census xxvi.

II. The Inheritance of Women xxvii. 1-11

III. The Summons to Moses xxvii. 12-23
(Sequel. Deut. xxxiv.)

IV. Repetition of Laws xxviii.—xxx.

V. War with Midian xxxi.

VI. Settlement of Reuben, Gad, and half-tribe of Manasseh xxxii.

VII. List of Journeyings xxxiii. 1-49

VIII. Repetition of Laws xxxiii. 50—xxxvi.

NUMBERS

THE book of Numbers deals with the wilderness. It is principally the story of a long discipline due to disobedience. The national idea moves forward, for God ever protects His own purposes against the failure of His chosen instruments. In the book of Exodus we saw the emergence and consolidation of the nation which God had chosen to be the channel of communication between Himself and the world at large. In Leviticus we considered the laws of its worship. In Numbers the movement toward actual possession of the land commences. This movement, however, was hindered for nearly forty years, and the book is principally occupied with matters relating to that period. It closes with the account of the return of the people to the borders of the land.

Thus it naturally falls into three parts, the first dealing with the Preparation for Entrance (i.-x.); the second giving the story of the Exclusion and Wandering (xi.-xxv.); while the last gives the account of how, after the long discipline, they were brought back and prepared for actual Possession (xxvi.-xxxvi.).

A. On the Margin of the Land

In this division we watch the final movement of the chosen people in preparation for coming into the land, and in doing so observe the order of the camp, the purity of the camp, the worship of the camp, the movement of the camp.

By the command of Jehovah the men from twenty years and upwards were numbered. This was the first movement in preparation not merely for their entrance to the land, but for their carrying out of the Divine purpose. That purpose was first punitive. In the interests of purity corrupt peoples were to be swept out.

Definite instructions were given concerning the relative positions to be occupied by the tribes, both in the time of encampment and on the march. At the centre of everything was the Tabernacle. The Levites were encamped round the two sides and at the back thereof. Moses and the priests occupied the fourth side, close to the courts of worship. Outside the enclosure the tribes of the nation were grouped under their standards according to the Divine command. The service of the Levites was described in detail. Their sacred work was carefully apportioned both for the

march and for places of encampment. All these provisions solemnly impressed upon the people the supreme importance of worship, and revealed to them the orderliness of Jehovah.

On the eve of the coming of the people into the land, the necessity for the purity of the camp was emphasized. All who were unclean were put outside. This, of course, does not mean that they were left to perish, but that they were not allowed to march in their proper place with the tribes of the people. For the time being they were camp-followers only. Moreover, the necessity for moral rectitude was insisted upon, and such as had in any way sinned against others made restitution.

Having provided for the purity of the camp by the exclusion of the unclean, special instructions were given concerning cases of peculiar and special devotion to a life of separation to God. There is absolutely nothing monastic in the order of the Nazarites. These men did not separate themselves from their fellowmen, or from their ordinary avocations, but remained in the midst of their fellows, and prosecuted their daily calling, though yet maintaining an attitude of special consecration. At the close of this section dealing with the purity of the camp, we find the specific form in which

the priestly blessing was to be pronounced upon the people.

Immediately following are the arrangements concerning the worship of the camp. This section opens with an account of the voluntary offerings on the part of the princes. It is first to be noticed that the giving was voluntary, and next that it was equal, thus precluding the possibility of a spirit of rivalry, and indicating a great unity of purpose. While all the story might have been told in a few words, it is set forth with elaborate detail. Every man is named, and every gift is chronicled.

In the final arrangements concerning worship, before the moving forward of the people, the one symbol referred to is that of the light, which was the type of the witness-bearing of the nation. In the consecration of the Levites, no anointing oil or blood was used, neither was any specific dress provided. The sign of their cleansing was the simple one of water. Finally, the great Passover feast was observed. A month later a special observance of the same feast was arranged for such as, through defilement, were precluded from taking part in the first.

At last everything was ready for the march, and the hosts waited only the Divine will. The people were to follow the moving of the

cloud, and to answer the blast of the trumpet. Careful instructions were given concerning the use of these trumpets. Different notes suggested different meanings to those who listened. On the twentieth day of the second month the actual movement of the camp commenced. The division ends with the suggestive words which Moses used at the commencement and close of each successive movement of the hosts. They indicated the profound recognition on his part, and on that of the people, that everything centred around the presence and government of God, both in regard to the victory of Israel over her enemies, and her own safety and well-being.

B. Exclusion and Wandering

In this second division of the book is revealed the failure of man. Its general movement may be indicated by the words, Discontent, Disaster, Discipline.

The discontent manifested itself first against God. At the beginning there was no open revolt against authority. The people were, however, in all probability, conscious of the irksomeness of restraint. They were learning that liberty was not license, and so throughout the camp the Lord heard the tone of murmuring and discontent. His judgment was

sudden and swift. Moses became an intercessor, and the fire abated.

A second time discontent manifested itself, and this time it was expressed against circumstances. Influenced by the mixed multitude which had accompanied them, the people hungered after the things of Egypt, apparently forgetting the cruelty of its bondage. Moses was perplexed and perturbed, and he poured out his complaint into the ear of God. In infinite patience God talked with him, and to the murmuring people He sent quails, and through them the punishing plague. As the psalmist afterwards sung, "He gave them their request; but sent leanness into their souls."

A third time there was a manifestation of rebellion. Miriam and Aaron, in whose hearts there was evidently an under-current of jealousy, made the marriage of Moses to a Cushite woman the occasion of protesting against his exercise of authority. They were punished immediately, and pardoned in answer to the earnest cry of Moses.

The hour had now arrived when the people should have gone forward. The story of the sending of the spies, as told in Numbers, indicates that it was done in obedience to a Divine command. The comparison of this, however, with Moses' account of it in Deuteronomy will

show that this command of the Lord was the sequel to a determination on the part of the people to do so. This was in itself an act of suspicion and unbelief. The spies were sent, and in forty days returned, bringing with them a majority report and a minority report. All were agreed as to the desirability of the land. The majority, however, had seen the difficulties of possessing, and beyond this had seen nothing. The minority had seen first Jehovah, then the excellencies of the land, and finally the difficulties. The essential difference was that of the vision of God. The people were influenced, as, alas! men too often are, by the majority, and in unutterable folly they declared that it was preferable to return to Egypt. One of the most magnificent pictures in the Old Testament is presented to us as Moses interceded with God on behalf of the people. His plea, however, was not based upon pity in his heart for the sinning people, but upon that deeper passion for the honour of the name of God. The people were pardoned, but they must be excluded from the land. They had themselves rejected the land toward which God had brought them, and their punishment was that they should not enter it.

This decree of Jehovah was followed by an

instance of false repentance. The men came to the consciousness of their unutterable folly, and then resolved to go up and possess the land in their own strength. The result was defeat and disaster.

Then began the long years of discipline. It is a story full of sadness. At first we follow the people through a period in which the results of their failure were manifest in their internal life. The Sabbath was violated, and the guilty one was punished. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram led an organized opposition against Moses, and were summarily dealt with. After this new arrangements were made, and old laws repealed. Then as the people, toward the close of the forty years, were led back into the neighbourhood of Kadesh-barnea, Miriam died, and was buried. In this neighbourhood, moreover, Moses and Aaron both failed in simple allegiance to God, and they also were excluded from the land.

It would seem as though the people were moving, on their own part, in an attempt to find their way into the land. Their endeavour to go in one direction, changed through the opposition of Edom, would seem to indicate the absence of the guiding pillar of cloud and fire. During this time Aaron died. His death was a solemn and impressive ceremony. The robes

of his office were transferred to his son. He then died, and was buried amidst the lamentations of the people. The transference of the outward symbols of the priestly office taught the truth that the priesthood was greater than the man. In these final days of exclusion Balaam was hired to prophesy against the people of Jehovah.

c. On the Margin of the Land

The third and last section of the book of Numbers is devoted to the second numbering of the people, and their preparation for coming into possession of the land from which they had been excluded for forty years. In a study of this division there are discoverable two movements. The first chronicles historic facts in their sequence, and the other is an insistence upon the Divine government by the repetition of certain laws with new emphasis and applications. There is a marked continuity of purpose, notwithstanding the change of persons. Two men only of those who had come to the margin were allowed to pass into the land. The time for the passing of Moses had come, and in all God's dealings with him there is manifest a great tenderness. The final account of his death is reserved for the ending of the next book. In this, however, we have

the story how he publicly appointed his successor. When the call of God came to him to ascend the mountain and view the land, and to be gathered to his people, the final passion of his heart was that which had so long sustained him in the midst of all the trying circumstances of his work as leader. He thought of the great congregation as the congregation of Jehovah, and prayed for the appointment of a successor. Thus there was granted to him the satisfaction of knowing that the one who succeeded him in leading the people was the man of God's own choice.

After a repetition of the laws concerning the great religious observances of the people, we have the account of a war directly connected with the sin of the people, resulting from the influence of Balaam. In the battle Balaam was slain. Even here the imperfection of the people was manifest in the desire on the part of Reuben, Gad, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to settle on the wrong side of the Jordan. Moses failed in judgment in allowing them to do so, out of which failure trouble arose in after-years.

The book ends with a list of the journeyings of the people during the period of their exclusion, and a repetition of laws with special

reference to settlement in the land. Through all the book there is manifest the forward movement, not of men, but of Jehovah. It is a revelation of the sure procedure of God toward the final working out into human history of His purposes for the world.

DEUTERONOMY

DEUTERONOMY—THE BOOK OF REVIEWS

A RETROSPECT *i.—iv. 43*	B RÉSUMÉ OF LAWS *iv. 44—xxvii. 10*	C WARNINGS *xxvii. 11—xxviii.*	D THE COVENANT *xxix.—xxxi. 13*	E THE SONG *xxxi. 14—xxxii. 47*	F THE BLESSING *xxxii. 48—xxxiii.*
I. Introduction i. 1-5 **The Place**	**Introduction iv. 44-49** **Character and Place**	**I. Introduction xxvii. 11-26** **The Curses**	**I. Introduction xxix. 1-2a**	**I. Introduction xxxi. 14-30**	**I. Introduction xxxii. 48-52**
II. The Discourse i. 6—iv. 40 i. Review of the forty years. i. 6—iii. ii. Exhortation to Obedience. iv. 1-40 *a.* Retrospective. 1-24 *b.* Prospective 25-31 *c.* Introspective. 32-40	**II. The Discourse v.-xxvi.** i. "Testimonies." v.-xi. 31 *a.* The Decalogue. v.-vi. *b.* Obedience. vii.-xi. 31 ii. "Statutes." xi. 32-xvi. 17 *a.* Worship xii.-xiv. 2 *b.* Some effects of Worship on Conduct. xiv. 3-xvi. 17 iii. "Judgments." xvi. 18-xxvi. *a.* Principles of Law. xvi. 18-20 *b.* Administration of Law. xvi. 21-xxvi. 19	**II. The Discourse xxviii.** i. The Blessing of Obedience. 1-14 ii. The Cursing of Disobedience. 15-68	**II. The Discourse xxix. 2b xxx.** i. The Appeal to the past. xxix. 2b-9 ii. The Terms of the Covenant. 10-29 iii. The Appeal to the future. xxx.	**II. The Song xxxii. 1-43** i. Introduction. 1-3a ii. A Contrast. 3b-5 iii. An Appeal. 6a iv. A Contrast. 6b-18 v. Judgment. 19-28 vi. Lament. 29-30 vii. Final Deliverance. 31-43	**II. The Blessing xxxiii**

DEUTERONOMY

DEUTERONOMY is the last of the books of the Pentateuch. It is didactic rather than historic. Its actual history covers a very brief period, probably not many days. It consists of a collection of the final public utterances of Moses. The form in which we possess it is in all likelihood the result of the work of an editor, who collected these great discourses, and connected them by such information concerning the occasion of their utterance as should make them a consecutive series, and thus give them value in their relation to the earlier books. It has been surmised that this work was done by Joshua, and this, to say the least, is quite probable.

The book is, therefore, essentially a book of Moses, for it consists of his final words to the people whom he had led, first out of Egypt, and then for forty years of wandering in the wilderness. It may therefore be most simply divided by the six discourses which it chronicles. Of these discourses the first was a Retrospect (i.-iv. 43); the second, a Résumé of Laws (iv. 44-xxvii. 10); the third, the uttering of Warnings (xxvii. 11-xxviii.); the fourth, con-

cerned the Covenant (xxix.-xxxi. 13); the fifth was a great farewell Song (xxxi. 14-xxxii. 47); and the sixth, a final Benediction (xxxii. 48-xxxiii.).

A. First Discourse: Retrospect

In reviewing the forty years of wandering Moses dealt with the three great movements: first, from Horeb to Kadesh-barnea; secondly, from Kadesh-barnea to Heshbon; and finally, from Heshbon to Beth-peor. In looking back he was careful to state all the facts in the light of God's government. Their disturbance at Horeb was due to the direct commandment of God, and even though the path of the wilderness was a terrible one, they had not been left to grope their way through it alone. God had ever moved before them, choosing them out a place in which to pitch their tents. Moreover, he reminded them that they had not only been the objects of God's love, but that His power had wrought on their behalf.

Having surveyed the history from Horeb to Beth-peor, he exhorted them to obedience. Reminding them of the importance of the commandments, he based his appeal upon the greatness of God and the perfection of His law, insisting upon it that their whole existence and history centred around a spiritual ideal.

There had been granted to them no visible form of God, even amid the majestic manifestations of Sinai, and therefore he warned them against making any graven image.

Continuing this exhortation to obedience, he looked into the future, and in the light of subsequent history his words were indeed prophetic. At the close of the first discourse we have a brief account of his appointment of three cities of refuge.

B. Second Discourse: Résumé of Laws

A general introduction indicates the place, time, and subject of this second discourse, which deals with testimonies, statutes, and judgments. The testimonies were the actual words of the law given, and these were first dealt with. The statutes were the provisions for worship, and the conduct harmonizing therewith. The judgments dealt with the arrangements for civil and religious authority, and the administration of justice.

A study of the testimonies, or uttered words of the law, reveals the fact that no vital change was made at any point in the nature or binding force of the commandments. There were slight verbal alterations, but these were due to the circumstances in which they were uttered. One striking difference is that in connection

with the law concerning the Sabbath: the ground of appeal was no longer the rest of God in creation, but their position as redeemed from Egypt's bondage. Having referred to the ten words, a great statement was made as to the deepest value thereof, and as to the peoples' corresponding responsibility. "Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah." The true response of the people to this truth was that of fear issuing in obedience, and resulting in well-being. The discourse then proceeded to deal with the responsibilities in detail.

Dealing with the statutes, he carefully warned them against idolatry, and commanded that all idols and false places of worship were to be destroyed as they entered the land. Nothing was to be allowed to seduce them from their loyalty to Jehovah in worship. He then passed to injunctions, which revealed his consciousness of the effect of worship on conduct; and finally, restated the arrangements for the observation of the great feasts.

In dealing with judgments, he first commanded the appointment of judges and officers, and then declared the principles upon which they were to act. The three-fold medium through which the will of God would be interpreted to the people—that namely of king, priest, and prophet—he then described. The

laws of peace and of war were set out in great detail, and finally provision was made for a ceremony of blessing and cursing on the mountains of Ebal and Gerizim, when the land was entered.

C. The Third Discourse: Warnings

In this third discourse Moses devoted himself to solemnly warning the people. Before proceeding to this more specific purpose of his discourse, he spoke of the blessings which would follow obedience. The effect of disobedience he described first in their own borders. Adversity of every kind would overtake them in trade, agriculture, and in matters of health; and in every way there would be suffering if there were disobedience. In all this he really uttered prophetic words, for we find here a detailed description of the Roman victories, which came so long after, and the ultimate destruction of the city and the driving out of the people.

D. Fourth Discourse: The Covenant

The terms of the covenant had been already given. In urging the people to be true to it, Moses first of all referred to the Lord's deliverances wrought in the past, from Egypt, through the wilderness experience, and in the

day of battle on the eve of their coming into possession. His appeal was made to all classes. In prophetic and burning words he described what would be the result of their breaking the covenant. Recognizing their imperfection, and their inability to appreciate the methods of the Divine government, he enunciated a principle of far-reaching importance and perpetual application. He declared that the secret or hidden or mysterious things belong to God, while the things revealed belong to us and to our children. Continuing his discourse, he uttered words thrilling at once with all tenderness and urgency of appeal. We have here a great prophetic evangel, the value of which Israel has perhaps not learned even until today.

After the conclusion of the formal discouse, Moses spoke to the people of his own departure, and encouraged their heart in view of their coming into the land by reassuring them of the presence and power of God.

E. Fifth Discourse: The Song of Moses

Preceding the public uttering of the great Song, Moses and Joshua appeared before the Lord in order that the latter might be officially appointed to succeed in the administration of affairs. Jehovah then solemnly spoke to His

servant, telling him that his time had come to sleep with his fathers, but that the people he had so long loved and cared for would indeed fulfil his predictions concerning failure, and would be visited with punishment. Gloomy enough was the outlook for the great leader, but it was the occasion of one of those manifestations of the Divine love which are so full of beauty.

It was in face of this foreknown fact of failure that he was commanded to write the song. The purpose of it was distinctly stated. A song embodied in the nation's life remains from generation to generation, and in days of disaster will constitute a haunting memory, testifying to truth concerning God. Songs often remain after commandments are forgotten. The law was written and committed to the priests; the song was written and taught to the people. The first part of the song consisted of a call to attention, and a statement concerning its nature. Heaven and earth were called to listen while the servant of God proclaimed the name of God. Moses sang of God as to His greatness, His perfection, His justice, His faithfulness. Then in a description equally brief, he referred to the people. It was a sad contrast. There is nothing said of them which is good. There follows a descrip-

tion of the tender government of God which is full of exquisite beauty. It is a revelation of the love which lies behind all law. The figure of the eagle and its method with its young is one of the most superb in the whole Bible, as a revelation of the truth that through methods which may appear almost unkind, love is working perpetually toward the higher development of those upon whom it is set. In strange contrast the song now became a wail as the unfaithfulness of the loved people was described. Such unfaithfulness had resulted in discipline necessarily severe. The people who had turned to the false were abandoned to the false. The face which had been as the sunlight was hidden from the people who had turned their back upon it. The very tenderness of love had become the burning of a fierce anger, and the benefits had been replaced by chastisement. The song then broke out into lament, "Oh, that they were wise," and celebrated God's ultimate deliverance of His people. Finally Moses appealed to the people to be obedient.

F. Sixth Discourse: The Blessing

These were the final words of the man of God. Often had he set before his people blessing and cursing. His last words were of blessing only. In stately and majestic language he

affirmed anew the majesty of Jehovah. The great words of blessing were pronounced upon the tribes, Simeon only being omitted. Reuben and Judah were referred to in terms which suggested that they were to be saved, yet so as by fire. Levi, having lost all earthly things for the special honour of bearing the word of God, would receive the reward of such sacrifice. Benjamin was to have the special protection needed by frailty. The choicest things were said concerning Joseph. His were all precious things, and the good-will of Him Who dwelt in the bush. His, therefore, was the portion of government. In Issachar and Zebulun there was to be triumph over disability. Gad, overcoming at last, was to be a judge; and Dan was the type of conquest. Naphtali was to be satisfied, and Asher sustained. Thus in his final benediction Moses made the peculiar realization of blessing by the tribes unfold the all-sufficiency of God.

The last chapter of Deuteronomy is in all probability the writing of another hand. It contains the story of the death of Moses, the equipment of Joshua for his work, and a last tender reference to the great leader and lawgiver. The passing of Moses was full of beauty. In the fact of his exclusion from the land toward which his face had so long been

set was his punishment. Yet it was tempered with mercy. There had been no weakening of his force. His career ended in full strength. He went up into the mount to die, and Jehovah gave him a vision of the land, and buried him in the valley.

The last words are almost a wail of sorrow: "There hath not arisen a prophet . . . like unto Moses." Thus ends the last book of the Pentateuch. The nation created for regeneration among the nations was on the margin of possession. The great story will now move on through the history of these people to the coming of the promised One.

JOSHUA

JOSHUA—THE BOOK OF POSSESSION

A
THE CONQUEST OF THE LAND
i.—xii.

I. Mobilization i., ii.

i. The Call to Arms. i.
a. God's Call to Joshua. 1-9
b. Joshua's Call to the People. 10-18
ii. The Mission of the Spies. ii.

II. Advance iii.—v.

i. Crossing of the Jordan. iii. iv.
a. The Crossing. iii.
b. The Final Movements. iv.
ii. Ceremonies of Consecration. v.

III. War vi.—xi.

i. Jericho. vi.
i. Ai. vii., viii.
a. Defeat. "But." vii.
b. Victory. viii.
iii. Beth-horon. ix. x.
a. The Deceit of the Gibeonites. ix.
b. The Defeat of five Kings. x. 1-27
c. The following Conquests. 28-43
iv. The Northern Kings. xi.

IV. Extent of the Conquest xii.

B
THE SETTLEMENT OF THE PEOPLE
xiii.—xxi.

I. Settlement according to Mosaic Promise xiii., xiv.

i. The two-and-a-half Tribes. xiii.
ii. The Possession of Caleb xiv.

II. Settlement of nine-and-a-half tribes xv.—xix.

i. Judah. xv.
ii. Ephraim. xvi.
iii. Manasseh. xvii.
iv. Benjamin. xviii.
v. The Rest. xix.

III. Settlement of Cities of Refuge and Levites xx., xxi.

i. Cities of Refuge. xx.
ii. The Levites. xxi.

C
JOSHUA'S FAREWELL
xxii.—xxiv.

I. The Two-and-a-half Tribes xxii.

II. Farewell Addresses xxiii.—xxiv. 15

i. First Address. xxiii.
ii. Second Address. xxiv., 1-15

III. Final Things xxiv. 16-33

JOSHUA

IN the ancient Hebrew Scriptures the second division was known as "The Prophets." In this division the first section included Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, and First and Second Kings, and was called "The earlier Prophets." Of this division Joshua was the first book. It derives its name from the great leader, the story of whose work is chronicled therein.

Of its authorship nothing definitely is known. In all likelihood it was largely the work of Joshua himself, subsequently added to, and completed, by some one or more of the elders of Israel. Its content is a continuation of the history of the chosen people. The nation led out by Moses is led in by his successor. This book tells the story. It is the book of possession, and may be broadly divided into three parts: The Conquest of the Land (i.-xii.); the Settlement of the People (xiii.-xxi.); Joshua's Farewell (xxii.-xxiv.).

A. The Conquest of the Land

In this first division there are four sections dealing with mobilization, advance, war, and the extent of conquest.

The first fact chronicled is that of the call to arms, and therein God's call to Joshua. His right of entrance to the land was that God had given it to His people. His power of entrance was that of the Divine presence. The conditions of his success were that he should be strong and courageous, and in order to this he was charged to be obedient to the law. Thus commissioned, Joshua issued his call to the people. It was characterized by urgency and despatch. Within three days the hosts were to move forward. Forty years before spies had been sent. Of these Joshua had been one of the few who had brought back a report true to God. He now sent them again. The principle of sending was, however, quite different. It was now the action of that faith which was characterized by caution. The spies, returning, made it evident that the promise of God that no man should be able to stand before Joshua was being fulfilled, for according to Rahab, "their terror was fallen upon the people." Rahab's action was that of faith. The men of Jericho shared her conviction, but rebelled against it. She recognized the activity of God, and yielded.

The first movement of the people forward was of such a nature as to impress them with the truth of their positive relation to God.

They came on to the actual soil of Canaan, not by deflecting the course of the river, nor by bridging it, but by direct Divine intervention. While obedience demanded haste, haste was not allowed to cause neglect of religious observance. Safely over Jordan, the hosts paused while stones were gathered out of the river-bed, and a ceremony of worship was observed. This miraculous crossing of the river produced a remarkable effect upon the surrounding people. "Their heart melted, neither was there any spirit in them any more." Before the actual march commenced, the Captain of the hosts of the Lord appeared to Joshua, and he was thus made to recognize that his authority and leadership depended upon his submission and obedience.

Preparation thus being complete, the hosts of Israel became the scourge of God, moving forward in judgment upon the corrupt peoples of the land. It is impossible to imagine anything more calculated to impress upon them their absolute weakness than the method of their victory. Marching priests and blatant horns are utterly inadequate to the capture of a city, and represent foolishness, judged by all ordinary methods of human warfare. The victory was theirs, but they were taught that it came not by might,

and not by power, but by their being obedient to the government of God. Suddenly the triumphant people were defeated. The reason was the sin of a man, which was also the sin of a nation. Israel had now become a nation, and no one person could act alone. Thus individualism is seen to become a far greater responsibility when it has ceased to be isolation. The sin of the one became the sin of the community. The evil thing was judged and punished, and through this return to obedience on the part of the nation the campaign moved victoriously forward. The story of the taking of Ai is one of acute military strategy. Thus the truth is brought into prominence that in prosecuting the work of Jehovah there must ever be a recognition of the value of the use of the best in human reason. Strategy without obedience is useless. Obedience includes the use of reason, the employment of common sense. The fame and dread of the people were spreading far and wide. The kings of Canaan formed a league against the oncoming hosts. Before they had time to take action a new peril threatened Israel in the strategy of the Gibeonites. The deceit being discovered, the action of Joshua was immediate and decisive. He felt bound by the letter of his covenant, but condemned the Gibeonites to per-

petual servitude, making them hewers of wood and drawers of water. This action of the Gibeonites aroused the anger of the confederate kings. In their peril the men of Gibeon appealed to Joshua. By forced marches he reached the scene of action, and the rout of the kings was complete.

Joshua followed up his advantage, immediately moving forward until the whole of Southern Canaan was in possession of Israel. A new confederacy had now to be faced and fought. The northern kings joined in an attempt to break the power of the conquering hosts. Turning swiftly north, Joshua routed them, and then turned back to Hazor, where victory still attended him. All this did not happen immediately. Indeed we are told that it had occupied "a long time." The division ends with a detailed summary of the extent of the conquest.

B. The Settlement of the People

Dean Stanley says, "In the book of Joshua we have what may without offence be termed 'The Doomsday Book of the Conquest of Canaan.' Ten chapters of that book are devoted to a description of the country, in which not only are its general features and boundaries carefully laid down, but the names and situa-

tions of its towns and villages enumerated with the precision of geographical terms which encourages, and almost compels, a minute investigation." Joshua was now about ninety years old, and was reminded that the conquest was by no means complete. There remained "much land to be possessed." In order that the chosen people might be able to complete the conquest and perfectly possess the land, it was now to be divided amongst them. Toward this end the provision made for the two and a half tribes on the east of Jordan was ratified.

Then followed provision for Caleb, who after forty-five years of waiting, claimed a definite possession in the land. Joshua's recognition of his friend, and of his right to a choice of possession, was quick and generous. He granted him the mountain which he asked, and blessed him.

In the settlement of the nine and a half tribes Judah stood first, as being the kingly and imperial tribe. The possession allotted to it was that of the fighting front. It remained loyal longer than the rest, but subsequently became contaminated with the abominations of the heathen. God's hosts are never overcome in fair and open fighting with His foes. It is the friendship of the world which is

enmity against God. The inheritance of Joseph was divided between Ephraim and Manasseh. To Ephraim was allotted a fertile and beautiful district, nevertheless a place of difficulty because it still lay in the power of the Canaanites. The territory of Manasseh was indicated, and then Ephraim and Manasseh, being discontented, complained to Joshua. His answer was characteristic. He knew the weakness of these tribes, and that they would become strong only by conflict. He instructed them to go up to the mountain and cut down the trees, and drive out the foes, and so enlarge their borders by cultivating their possession, rather than by seeking new ground. After rebuking the seven tribes for being slow to possess the land, Joshua erected the tabernacle at Shiloh. He then appointed three men from every tribe to divide the land into seven parts. One of these portions was allotted to each of the remaining tribes. The first of the seven fell to Benjamin. Then follows an account of the portions of the rest—Simeon, Zebulun, Issachar, Asher, Naphtali, Dan. When all had been provided Joshua asked and obtained his portion.

Having thus come into possession of the land, the cities of refuge were provided according to the arrangements already made.

Following these the Levites made application for their cities and pasturage, and the rulers and the people made ready response. Jacob's prophecy concerning Simeon and Levi, "I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel," was fulfilled in the case of Levi, in the scattering of the tribe through all the others. This second division of the book ends with the statement that the Lord gave, and they possessed the land. His promise to them was fulfilled. No man had been able to stand before them. Their enemies had been wholly delivered into their hands. They never completely realized the purpose of God in these matters. The failure, however, was wholly due to their own disobedience, and the record at this point fittingly closes with the declaration of the fidelity of God: "There failed not aught of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." Failure to possess what God gives is always that of His people, and never the result of unwillingness or weakness on His part.

C. Joshua's Farewell

At the close of the war the two and a half tribes returned to their possession on the other side of the Jordan. As they departed Joshua commended them for their fulfilment of their

promise, and charged them to be loyal to Jehovah. As the time for Joshua's .passing approached, he twice gathered the people together, and delivered farewell messages. The burden of the first was that of the power and faithfulness of God, with an earnest desire for the faithfulness of the people to Him. His warnings were perhaps more fiery and searching than those of Moses. The address was a wonderful revelation of the strength of that man, and of that strength as consisting in his acute consciousness of the relationship of the people to Jehovah, and his consequent passion for their loyalty to His law. The second time he gathered them to Shechem. In his final address he traced their history from the call of Abraham to the then present time, emphasizing the fact that everything of greatness in their history was of God. He finally charged them, "now, therefore, fear the Lord, and serve Him." There was a fine touch of courageous irony in the appeal which followed. If they would not serve God he called them to choose whom they would serve. Would they go back to the gods of their fathers beyond the river, or would they turn to the gods of the Amorites, in whose land they dwelt? He ended by declaring, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord."

The book closes with death—the death of Joshua, the second great leader, and the death of Eleazar, the second priest. Yet in the midst of the darkness of death there is something almost weird and yet full of the suggestion of hope—the bones of Joseph were buried in the land.

JUDGES

19,334

JUDGES—DELIVERANCES

A
AFTER JOSHUA
i.—iii. 6

I. Israel and the Canaanites i.

i. Judah. 1-21
ii. Joseph. 22-29
iii. The Rest. 30-36

II. Israel's Failure ii.—iii. 6

i. Jehovah's Messenger ii. 1-5
ii. The People under Joshua. 6-10
iii. Synopsis of History. 11-23
iv. The Enemies. iii. 1-6

B
THE JUDGES
iii. 7—xvi.

I. First Declension iii. 7—11

i. Sin. Idolatry.
ii. Punishment. 8 years' oppression
iii. Deliverance. OTHNIEL.

II. Second Declension iii. 12—31

i. Sin
ii. Punishment. Eglon. 18 years.
iii. Deliverance. EHUD (SHAMGAR)

III. Third Declension iv.—v.

i. Sin.
ii. Punishment. Jabin. 20 years.
iii. Deliverance. DEBORAH. BARAK.

IV. Fourth Declension vi.—viii. 32

i. Sin.
ii. Punishment.
iii. Deliverance. GIDEON.

V. Fifth Declension viii. 33—x. 5

i. Sin. Baalim.
ii. Punishment. Abimelech.
iii. Deliverance. TOLA. JAIR.

VI. Sixth Declension x. 6—xii.

i. Sin. Idolatry multiplied.
ii. Punishment. Philistines. Ammon. 18 years.
iii. Deliverance. JEPHTHAH (Successors)

VII. The Seventh Declension xiii.—xvi.

i. Sin.
ii. Punishment. Philistines. 40 years.
iii. Deliverance. SAMSON.

C
APPENDIX
xvii.—xxi.

I. Micah xvii., xviii.

i. Micah's Idolatry. xvii.
ii. Its Punishment by Danites. xviii.

II. The Levite xix.—xxi.

i. The Outrage. xix.
ii. War between Israel and Benjamin. xx.
iii. Preservation of Benjamin. xxi.

JUDGES

THE book of Judges historically covers the period from the conquest of the land and the death of Joshua to the judgeship of Samuel and the introduction of the monarchy. It is a story, on the human side, of disobedience and disaster, and on the Divine of direction and deliverance. It is, as its name signifies, the book which gives us the account of the judges. These men were dictators raised up in times of special need for the deliverance of the people. The chronological history of the book ends with chapter xvi., which connects naturally with the first book of Samuel. That history properly begins in chapter iii. So that we may consider the book in three divisions: Conditions after Joshua (i.-iii. 6); the Period of the Judges (iii. 7-xvi.); Appendix (xvii.-xxi.).

A. Conditions after Joshua

The first act of the people after the death of Joshua was that of seeking to know the will of God as to who should commence the final work of conquest. Judah, the kingly tribe, was appointed. It is evident that this work,

begun in earnest, eventually weakened. A false toleration towards a people utterly corrupt, who ought to have been exterminated, resulted in the ultimate undoing of the chosen nation.

The story is told of the coming of the messenger from Gilgal, who called them back to loyalty to God. A brief retrospect follows of the condition of affairs under Joshua, and then a synopsis of the history which is to be set out in greater detail. In this synopsis the rotation of sin, punishment, and deliverance is the keynote to the historical portion of the book.

B. The Period of the Judges

This division of the book contains the story of seven consecutive failures, punishments, and deliverances.

The first declension was that of neglect of God and turning to idols. The punishment consisted of eight years of oppression. When under this affliction they cried to God, and the first of the judges appeared in the person of Othniel. Forty years of rest followed.

The second declension occurred after the death of Othniel, when the people sinned again. Punishment came from Eglon, and lasted for eighteen years. Then they cried to the Lord again, and Ehud, with whom Sham-

gar was associated, was the deliverer. Eighty years of rest followed.

The third declension then followed, and they were delivered into the hands of Jabin. Twenty years of oppression resulted, which became most terrible under Sisera. Again they cried, and were heard. The story of deliverance is full of romance and poetry, being associated with the name of Deborah. This daughter of the people, true child of faith, had suffered under the intolerable consciousness of the degradation of her people. She gained the ear of many to such a degree that she was appointed to judge the people, and at last she called Barak to her aid. He, inspired by her teaching, and she, helped by his consecration, went forward, and Israel was delivered from oppression. The great song of Deborah is full of fire and passion, and a remarkable index to the character of the woman herself. It may be divided into two parts. The first was a great chant of confidence, telling the story of the deepest secret of the victories won. The second part celebrated the victory. Everything ended with a cry: "So let all Thine enemies perish, O Lord." Following this deliverance the land had rest for forty years.

The fourth declension issued in the victory of Midian, under whose oppression the people

groaned for seven years. So terrible was it that the people hid themselves in dens and caves and strongholds. At last, in answer to their cry, the movement of deliverance began, and associated with this was the name and story of Gideon. He is seen first at his work, with the bitterness of the whole situation burning like a fire in his bones. When there came to him the supernatural visitor his double consciousness was confessed. "Did not the Lord bring us up?" "The Lord hath cast us off." He was conscious of the true relation of the people to Jehovah, and also that on account of their sin they had been judged. Called to act as deliverer, we follow him in his work of preparation. This proceeded in three stages. It began at home. He broke down the altar of Baal in connection with his father's house, and restored the worship of God. The second movement was that of the sending out of the call. The final one was his fellowship with God, in which signs were granted to him. The story of the conflict is one of the most remarkable on record. In response to his call to all the hosts of the people only thirty-two thousand gathered. Of these such as were faint-hearted and afraid were bidden to return, and twenty-two thousand went back. Those remaining were subjected to a further test, with the re-

sult that only three hundred were left. The victory was perfect; but it was so won as to teach the people that the one and only condition was that of dependence upon God and implicit obedience to His command. Following the deliverance from the oppression of Midian, Gideon had to deal with troubles among his own people. This section ends with an account of the last things concerning Gideon. One of them was characterized by great nobility, and the other revealed a weakness which issued in trouble. They sought to make him king. He absolutely refused, and thus indicated his disinterestedness and his loyalty to God. The story of the making of the ephod is somewhat difficult of interpretation. In any case, the effect produced was evil, for the people were thereby seduced from their loyalty, and Gideon himself suffered deterioration.

The fifth declension followed immediately upon the death of Gideon. They fell into the sin of worshipping the Baalim. Judgment this time came from within rather than from without. Abimelech, a natural son of Gideon, a man unprincipled and brutal, but of great personal force, secured to himself the allegiance of the men of Shechem, and practically usurped the position of king. In order to make his position secure, he encompassed the massa-

cre of all the sons of Gideon, except Jotham. His parabolic prophecy from the height of Mount Gerizim indicated the line along which judgment would fall upon the sinning people. The tyranny of Abimelech's rule lasted for three years. He was then slain by the hand of a woman, and a period of forty-five years' quietness followed under the dictatorship of Tola and Jair.

The sixth declension was characterized by an almost utter abandonment of the people to idolatry. The list of the forms which this idolatry took is appalling. Judgment came this time from the Philistines and the men of Ammon, and continued for eighteen years. At last, sore distressed, they cried to God, and for the first time it is recorded that He refused to hear them, and reminded them of how repeatedly He had delivered them. The true attitude of Jehovah toward them, however, flamed out in a remarkable statement, "His soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." Deliverance came at length through Jephthah, a study of whose history is full of interest. He was the son of a harlot, and had been thrust out from his inheritance by the legitimate sons of his father. The iron had entered his soul, and he had gathered to himself a band of men, and had become a kind of outlaw freebooter.

He was a man of heroic daring, having certain excellencies of character which marked him out as capable in a crisis of need. The story of his victory and his vow follows. After his victory the men of Ephraim complained that they had not been called to help, as they had already done in the case of Gideon. This quarrel reveals the sad disintegration of the nation. The consciousness of its unity seems to have been largely lost.

The seventh declension opens with the declaration, "Israel again did that which was evil," and they were again delivered to discipline at the hands of the Philistines, under whose oppression they lived for forty years. Here occurs one of the strangest stories of the Old Testament, that of Samson. It is the story of a great opportunity and disastrous failure. Everything would seem to have been in his favour. His birth was foretold by an angel visitor. This foretelling led to his special training, and finally he was moved in his early years by the Spirit of the Lord. Grown to manhood's estate, he went to Timnath, and there was swept away by his passions into an unholy alliance. The story of his exploits is most remarkable. The circumstances of them are not to his credit. The overruling hand of God is seen checking the power of the Philis-

tines through him, but through all, his deterioration is manifest. His final fall occurred at Gaza. There is nothing, perhaps, in the sacred writings at once more pathetic and tragic than Samson, with his eyes put out, grinding in the house of the Philistines. At last, out of his degradation he cried to God, and in his death struck the heaviest blow at the people from whose oppression he ought to have delivered his own nation.

Here ends the history of our book. It is taken up again in the first book of Samuel. The remaining chapters and the book of Ruth have their chronological place in the period already dealt with.

C. Appendix

The events here chronicled may have taken place closely following the death of Joshua. They give us a picture of the internal condition of the people, and it is most probable that they were added with that as the intention of the historian. Micah's act was a violation of the second commandment. His action was not that of adopting the idolatries of the heathen. His mother's language showed her recognition of Jehovah. "Blessed be my son of the Lord." Moreover, Micah's words when he persuaded the Levite to be his priest showed the same

thing. "Now know I that the Lord will be my God." The images were intended to aid him in his worship of Jehovah. The whole story is a revelation of a degenerate condition. Micah had robbed his mother. On making restitution he accompanied the act, at her instigation, with this religious movement. The consent of the Levite to become a priest in the house of Micah for the sake of a living was a further revelation of the same degeneracy.

The story of the backsliding of individuals is followed by an illustration of its widespread existence among the people. The Danites, in the course of seeking new territory, found Micah and the condition of things established in his house. When presently they moved forward to possess, they did not hesitate to seize his images and capture his priest.

The story of the Levite follows, and is a clear revelation of the startling moral conditions. Resulting from it, the nation was stirred to its centre, and a great moral passion flamed out. Israel went to war with Benjamin. Uninstructed zeal will, even in the cause of righteousness, often go beyond its proper limits. The carnage continued until not above six hundred men of the tribe of Benjamin were left. Then followed a sudden revulsion, and pity operated to the saving of Benjamin.

RUTH

RUTH—FAITH AMID FAITHLESSNESS

A THE CHOICE OF FAITH *i., ii.*	B THE VENTURE OF FAITH *iii.*	C THE REWARD OF FAITH *iv.*
I. Naomi's Sorrows **i. 1-13**	**I. Naomi** **1-5**	**I. The Redemption** **1-12**
i. Elimelech to Moab. 1-2	Doubtful	
ii. The Sorrows. 3-13	Yet in light of times	
II. Ruth's Choice **i. 14-22**	**II. Ruth** **6-9**	**II. The Marriage** **13a**
i. Orpah. 14	The Claims of Kinsman	
ii. Ruth. 15-18	Rights	
iii. The Home-Coming of Bitterness. 19-22		
III. Boaz' Field **ii.**	**III. Boaz** **10-18**	**III. The Issue** **13b-22**
i. Ruth's Purpose. 1-3	i. The Appeal to the next of Kin	
ii. Boaz. 4-16	ii. The Tender Love	
iii. The means of Support. 17-23		

RUTH

THE book of Ruth stands in striking contrast to the book of Judges, and yet is closely connected with it. In that book the national outlook has been presented, and so dark has it been as to create the impression of universal pollution. The story of Ruth illustrates the truth that God has never left Himself absolutely without witness. Throughout all the period of degeneracy there had been loyal and beautiful souls: children of faith, living, in the midst of the conflict and strife, the life of loyalty to God, simple, trustful, and triumphant.

This book is the story of a few such. Some incidents in their history are grouped together with fine poetic beauty. It is indeed an idyll of faithfulness amid infidelity. It has, moreover, the value of being a link in the history, showing how God led on to the next stage. All the interest of the book centres around the persons whose names are on every page. It may be divided into three divisions: the Choice of Faith (i. ii.); the Venture of Faith (iii.); the Reward of Faith (iv.).

A. The Choice of Faith

During a time of famine Elimelech, his wife, and two sons, went into the country of Moab to find bread and escape trouble. It is questionable whether their action was justified, and the sorrows which followed would seem to be of the nature of chastisement. To begin with, their sons married Moabitish women. Then Elimelech died, and his sons also, so that sorrow on sorrow came to the heart of Naomi. It is perfectly evident, however, that their action was rather that of foolish blundering than of wilful rebellion. Through all they maintained their faith in the one God. Perhaps it would be nearer the actual facts of the case to say that Naomi, through all her suffering, was loyal. When the heart at its deepest is true to God, grace finds an opportunity to work through chastisement to best results, notwithstanding the follies of a faltering faith.

When at last Naomi turned her face again to her own country, with great generosity she urged her daughters-in-law to leave her, and settle among their own people. This was the occasion of that choice of Ruth which in its devotion, and in the manner in which she expressed it, has become enshrined in the admiration of the world. With constant recur-

rence Ruth's language has been used to express the fidelity of love. It was the choice of a strong affection. The young woman found her heart closely knit to the older one, and she declined to be severed from her in the pathway that lay before her, choosing to share whatever the future might have in store for the one upon whom her love was set. This hardly touches the deepest note, for it is impossible to read her language without seeing that the very reason of her love for Naomi was the new faith which she had learned from her. The deepest note in her expression of devotion was "thy God my God," and it was to Jehovah she appealed. She announced her devotion to Naomi even to death. The language of Naomi at the home-coming showed that she looked upon the sorrows that had come to her as God's testimony against her and His affliction of her. There was no touch of rebellion in what she said, but that gracious recognition of chastisement which always indicates that the lessons have been learned.

The home-coming was to poverty, and the practical problem of life faced the two women. This was rendered more difficult by the fact that Ruth was a Moabitess. Yet she it was who faced the fight, and went forth as a gleaner to gather what would suffice for present sus-

tenance. The human side of things is beautifully expressed in the words, "Her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging unto Boaz." The lines of the picture are few, but they are strong, and a man of fine quality is revealed to us. His greeting to his labourers, "The Lord be with you," and their ready response, "The Lord bless thee," reveal a man of strong and yet natural religious life. His presence in the field, overseeing the affairs of harvest, and his quick recognition of the strange girl gleaning, show a man of business capacity. Then all the rest of the story evidences the graciousness of his temper and the greatness of his heart. He knew that in all probability a Moabitish woman would not be very earnestly welcomed among his people; and he therefore, with assiduous care, provided for her. His influence is at once seen in the absence of objection among the people, and their readiness to co-operate with him. In short, Boaz stands out as a man of finest fibre, living simply and strongly in a degenerate age.

B. The Venture of Faith

Gleaning as a means of livelihood could only last through harvest, and Naomi was anxious about the future, especially that of Ruth. As the outcome of her anxiety we have the story

of her venture to interest Boaz more fully, and bring about a marriage between him and Ruth. Of course the expedient to which she resorted must be judged. in the light of her own age, as we have so constantly to remember. Yet, notwithstanding this, it can hardly be characterized as other than doubtful, and on the basis of faith it is difficult to justify it.

Yet again, it was rather an error of judgment than wilful disobedience, and the overruling love of God moved on to beneficent issue. One element, and perhaps the strongest, was the confidence in Boaz which this venture revealed. In order to provide for the future, Naomi's appeal should have been made to one nearer of kin, but the whole attitude of Boaz toward Ruth had inspired such confidence in him that it was through him she hoped for succour. The story of her venture was on the whole to his honour rather than to theirs.

c. The Reward of Faith

The nobility and faithfulness of Boaz are manifest in this story. It is hardly possible to read this book naturally without believing that Boaz had already found himself in love with Ruth, and there is no doubt that he was perfectly ready to take the responsibility of the next-of-kin, but there was one who had a

prior right, and in loyalty to the law of his people he gave him the opportunity. It is an interesting picture presented to us of the gathering of the elders in the gate, and the legal statement of the case. The next-of-kin had a perfect right to abandon his claim, seeing that another was ready to assume it; and moreover, it can hardly be denied that he was justified on the ground of not desiring to run the risk of impoverishing his own family, seeing that Boaz was well able to fulfil all the obligations of the case.

The story ends with poetic simplicity and beauty. "Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife." Nothing need be added to this to indicate the joy and reward of two faithful souls, Naomi was at last comforted. The women of her own people spoke words of cheer to her, which unquestionably were full of comfort as they sang the praise of the one who had chosen to share her affliction, and had become the medium of her succour.

There is a stately simplicity in the story of the issue. "They called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David." In this final word of the book there is manifest the Divine movement in the history of the chosen people. Thus the kingly line was ordered in the midst of infidelity, through faith-

ful souls. Presently the people clamoured for a king, and one was appointed for a time, through whom they learned the difference between earthly rule and the direct government of God. The man after God's own heart succeeded him, and his coming was from those who had realized the Divine ideal, and walked humbly with God. Yet a larger issue followed as the centuries passed. From this union came at last, as to the flesh, Jesus the Christ.

I. SAMUEL

I. SAMUEL—TRANSITION

A SAMUEL *i.—vii.*	B SAUL *viii.—xv.*	C DAVID *xvi.—xxxi.*
I. Preparation i.—iv. 1a	**I. Appointment viii.—x.**	**I. Preparation xvi.—xx.**
i. Birth and Childhood. i.—ii. 11	i. The people's demand. viii.	i. Anointed. xvi.
ii. Life at Shiloh. ii. 12-36	ii. Samuel's Search. ix.	ii. Progress. xvii.—xviii. 5
iii. Call. iii.—iv. 1a.	iii. Anointing and Coronation. x.	iii. Difficulties. xviii. 6—xx.
II. Crisis iv. 1b.—vii. 1	**II. Reign xi.—xiv.**	**II. In Exile xxi.—xxvii.**
i. Eli. iv. 1b-22	i. Kingdom established. xi., xii.	i. Flight. xxi.
ii. The Ark. v.—vii. 1	ii. Wars. xiii., xiv.	ii. Varied experiences. xxii.—xxvii.
III. Judgeship vii. 2-17	**III. Rejection xv.**	**III. Returning xxviii.—xxxi.**
i. Twenty years.	i. War with Amalek.	i. Saul and the Witch. xxviii.
ii. Ebenezer.	ii. Disobedience.	ii. David. xxix., xxx.
iii. Samuel, governing on Circuit.	iii. Rejection.	iii. Death of Saul. xxxi.
	iv. "Samuel mourned for Saul."	

I. SAMUEL

THE first book of Samuel covers a period of transition in the history of the nation. It deals with the process from the judges to the kings. The condition of the chosen people under the judges we have seen to have been one of terrible degeneracy. It was during this period that they practically rejected God from being King. The clamour for an earthly king which followed was the natural outcome of this practical rejection.

In this book we have the history of the people from the last of the judges, Samuel, through the troublous times of Saul, in which they learned what government by man really meant, to the beginning of the reign of the king chosen by God, David.

The book naturally falls into three sections around the names of these three men. The periods of their influence overlap, but there is sufficient definiteness in the changes to create the possibility of the following analysis: Samuel (i.-vii.); Saul (viii.-xv.); David (xvi.-xxxi.).

A. Samuel

In the dark and troublous times Jehovah

is seen working toward deliverance, by answering the prayer of faith as it operated in the heart of a simple and trusting woman. There was much of human passion manifest in her desire, but the fact that she turned to Jehovah is evidence of her trust in Him; and upon the basis of that evidence He prepared a way for the future guidance of the people. Her boy Samuel was dedicated for life to the service of God.

The story of the life at Shiloh reveals two movements going forward simultaneously in Israel, those namely of degeneration and regeneration. The corruption of the priesthood was appalling. Within the precincts of the Tabernacle Samuel was preserved from pollution, and grew in the fear of the Lord.

At last, while yet a boy, Samuel was distinctly called, and the first message entrusted to him was a terrible one. A further period of training and growth followed before he was ready to assume the work of leadership. During that period the Lord vindicated him by permitting no word he spoke to fall to the ground, that is, to fail of fulfilment.

The crisis of judgment foretold by Samuel came in connection with the Philistine attack upon the people. In the midst of the disaster, hoping to save themselves, the men of Israel

carried the ark of God into the fray. It was an entirely superstitious use thereof, and was utterly unavailing. The Philistines captured the ark itself.

The history of their possession of it is a most interesting one, in that it reveals how, when a people of God fail to bear testimony for Him among the nations, He becomes His own Witness. They first lodged it at Ashdod, in the house of the fish god, Dagon, with disastrous results to the idol. With speed and in fear they carried it to Gath, and a plague fell upon the people. They moved it hastily to Ekron, and painful and troublesome tumours broke out upon the people. At each move judgment became more severe, and Philistia found that, if she had been able to conquer and break the power of Israel, it was a different thing when she had to deal with Israel's God. At last they decided to send the ark back, accompanied by offerings which indicated their recognition of the fact that their plagues had been the visitation of God. Joshua of Beth-shemesh received the ark in a way worthy of an Israelite.

A dark period of twenty years is now passed over without detailed record. It would seem that during that time Israel was under Philistine rule without any definite centre of wor-

ship. During this period Samuel was advancing from youth to manhood, and approaching the hour of his leadership. This was ushered in by the lamenting of the people after God. Of this he took advantage, calling them to return to Him, and put away all strange gods. They obeyed, and were summoned to Mizpeh. Here, by a direct Divine intervention, the power of Philistia was broken, and her cities restored to Israel. Samuel erected an altar, and called it Ebenezer. This man of clear vision recognized both the government of God and its beneficent method. The Lord had helped them, through chastisement, to sorrow for sin, and through such sorrow to freedom from oppression.

In a brief paragraph the story of his actual judgeship is told. At Ramah was his home, and from there he journeyed in circuit once a year to Bethel, Gilgal, and Mizpeh, thus maintaining oversight, and administering the affairs of the people.

B. Saul

The book now merges into its second division, which has to do with Saul. The people clamoured for a king. The occasion of their request was the mal-administration of the sons of Samuel, and their sinful practices. The

real principle underlying it was a desire on their part to be, as they said, "like all the nations." They had been chosen to be unlike the nations, a people directly governed by Jehovah. Samuel declared to them what the issue of their wish would be if it were granted.

Saul was in every way a remarkable man. In the pursuit of his filial duty he was led into contact with Samuel. While they were alone, he communicated to him his Divine appointment. How long elapsed between this and his formal presentation to the people we do not know. This took place at Mizpeh. Here Saul manifested the first sign of weakness of character which eventuated in his failure. His hiding behind the stuff is often quoted as evidence of his modesty. Modesty, however, becomes sin when it prevents any man from stepping at once into the place to which God is calling him.

Returning to his house at Gibeah Saul did not take up the responsibilities of the kingship until the Ammonite invasion stirred him, and he gained a complete victory over them. Samuel immediately gathered the people to Gilgal, and Saul was confirmed in the kingship. On that occasion Samuel delivered what was practically his last great address to the nation. A study of that address will show how clearly

Samuel understood that these people could only be great as they remained loyal to the throne of God. Two chapters give an account of the wars Saul waged. The Philistines gathered themselves together with the express intention of destroying the power of the chosen people. It was in the midst of the fear which possessed the Israelites that Saul manifested his self-independence by offering sacrifice in the absence, and without the instruction, of Samuel. The king's deterioration in character is manifest, moreover, in the fact that he remained idle in Gibeah with his army, and it was at this time that Jonathan made his great strategic attack upon the Philistines, which resulted in their rout.

Saul was commissioned by Jehovah through Samuel to smite Amalek, and in connection with that campaign occurred the sin which filled his cup to the brim, and caused him to be rejected.

While he was victorious, he was disobedient in that he spared Agag and part of the spoil. The two men are seen in striking contrast at this point. Saul, the man of great opportunity, miserably failing, and passing along the pathway of disobedience to ruin. Samuel, rejected long ago of the people, still mighty in his allegiance to God, burning in anger, de-

nouncing in force, and finally, in a white heat of loyalty, himself hewing Agag in pieces. It was the last interview between the king and the prophet prior to the latter's death. Very touching is the statement, "Samuel mourned for Saul." When he failed, Samuel denounced him without sparing, and then in loneliness mourned over him.

c. David

We now come to the third section of the book, in which David is the principal figure. Samuel was rebuked for his prolonged mourning, and was commissioned to arise and anoint the new king. Through the melancholy of Saul, David found his way to the court. Then immediately the two men are seen in the presence of a national danger. Saul, notwithstanding his position and his army, was utterly incompetent. David without human resource, but conscious of the true greatness of his people, and sure of the strength of God, gained his victory over Goliath. One of the most charming love-stories of the Bible is that of the friendship between Jonathan and David. Coincident with the commencement thereof, the hatred of Saul against David deepened, and manifested itself in deeply laid schemes and unworthy methods, in which he attempted

to rid himself of his rival. These were trying days for the young man anointed to the kingly office, and it was natural that he should flee to Samuel for protection. Saul fast became an irresponsible madman, while David, through all the painful discipline, was being prepared for the work that lay before him.

At last the land itself seemed too hot to hold him, and he took refuge in flight. The period of his exile was characterized by varied experiences. Once he found refuge at Achish among the Philistines, and there had to feign madness. Coming at last to Adullam, he gathered around him a band of the outcasts of his own people. During this period Samuel died. Twice the life of Saul was in David's hands, and on each occasion he spared it. So terrible was the pressure of these dark days that David himself became pessimistic. "He said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul," and he passed into Gath, thus taking refuge among the Philistines.

Perhaps there is no chapter in Old Testament history more tragic than that of Saul's end. The last manifestation of his degradation was that of his visit to the witch of Endor. The men of Philistia became afraid of David, and he was dismissed from their midst. He

returned to Ziklag, and found that it had been sacked by the Amalekites.

The closing chapter of our book is draped in sackcloth and ashes. It tells the story of the end of the career of one of the most disastrous failures. Saul died upon the field of battle by his own hand. The chief spiritual value of this whole book lies in the solemn lessons it teaches by the life and failure and death of this man. For evermore his story proclaims the fact that great advantages and remarkable opportunities are no guarantees of success, unless the heart be firm and steady in its allegiance to principle and its loyalty to God.

II. SAMUEL

II. SAMUEL—THEOCRATIC MONARCHY

A
DAVID'S RISE
i.—x.

I. The Reign over Judah i.—iv.

i. His lamentation for Saul and Jonathan. i.
ii. His anointing as King of Judah. ii. 1-4
iii. War between Judah and Israel ii. 5—iv.

II. The Reign over the whole Nation v.—x.

i. Crowning. v. 1-5
ii. First Victories. 6-25
iii. The provision for the Ark. vi.
iv. Concerning the Temple. vii.
v. Conquests. viii. 1-14
vi. The appointment of Officers. 15-18
vii. Kingly kindness (Mephibosheth). ix.
viii. Victories over Ammon and Syria. x.

B
DAVID'S FALL
xi.—xx.

I. The Sin xi., xii.

i. War. xi. 1
ii. Sin. 2-27
iii. Repentance. xii.

II. The Punishment xiii.—xviii.

i. In the Family. xiii.—xiv. 24
Amnon and Tamar.
Absalom.
ii. In the Kingdom. xiv. 25—xviii.
Absalom.

III. The Restoration xix.—xx.

i. The King's return. xix.
ii. Insurrection quelled. xx.

C
APPENDIX
xxi.—xxiv.

I. The Government of God xxi. & xxiv.

i. Famine. xxi.
ii. The Census. xxiv.

II. The Character of David xxii.—xxiii. 7

i. Psalm. xxii.
God's Government.
ii. Psalm. xxiii. 1-7
David's Failure.
God's Faithfulness.

III. The Heroic Age xxiii. 8-39

The mighty men.

Here, as at the close of the First Book, several matters are dealt with, not chronologically, but as illustrating the times under consideration.

II. SAMUEL

THIS book deals almost exclusively with the history of David. Not with the whole of it, for it begins in I. Samuel, and runs on into I. Kings, and is dealt with from another standpoint in I. Chronicles. It is, however, the principal history of his kingship, and presents to us the picture of the theocratic monarchy. The people had clamoured for a king. God first gave them one after their own heart; He then gave them one after His own heart. By him also the failure of mediation in government was manifested. Yet he, by relation to God maintained even through times of sinning, contributed to the movement of history toward the one true King. There are three main divisions: David's Rise (i.-x.); David's Fall (xi.-xx.); Illustrative Appendix (xxi.-xxiv.).

A. David's Rise

In this first division of the book there are two movements, the one dealing with David's reign over Judah, and the other with his reign over the whole nation.

The book opens with the story of the bringing to David by an Amalekite of the news of

the death of Saul. The story was evidently a fabrication. David dealt with him severely, and then sang his great lamentation over the death of Saul and Jonathan. Over Saul and Jonathan it is stately and dignified, but it merges into extreme tenderness when it deals with his friend Jonathan only.

Anointed king of Judah, David's first act was that of inquiring of God as to what he should do. The spirit of Saul, which was that of antagonism to David, was perpetuated in Abner, who set himself to consolidate the kingdom of Israel around the house of Saul. Joab, a strange and rugged character, at once fierce and faithful, was nevertheless unswerving in his loyalty to David. In the first battle between Israel and Judah under these respective leaders, Asahel was slain. His death entered like iron into the soul of Joab, who never rested until his vengeance was satisfied on Abner. The struggle was a long and weary one, but, as the chronicler declares, "David waxed stronger and stronger, but the house of Saul waxed weaker and weaker."

David had won the heart of all Israel by his consistent justice and his manifestation of magnanimity toward those who stood in his way. The people recognized the kingly qualities of the man, and he was at last crowned

king of the whole nation. His first victory was that of the taking of Jebus. An element of weakness manifested itself at this point, when, having come into possession of the kingdom, he multiplied his concubines and wives.

Victorious in war, the king was not unmindful of the central truth of that national life over which he was called to preside. He brought the ark into the capital. In close connection with the account of his doing so, the story of his desire to build the Temple is told. It was a perfectly natural and, indeed, a proper desire. So much was this the case that it appealed to Nathan, who advised him to do all that was in his heart. It was not, however, in the will of God that he should carry out this work, and the prophet was sent to deliver the message which was neither in agreement with David's desire nor with his own opinion. The story reveals the triumph both of Nathan and David in their ready submission to the declaration of the will of God. The prophet unhesitatingly delivered his message, even though it contradicted his own expressed opinion. David immediately acquiesced in the will of God, and worshipped.

The story of David's victories has a closer connection with his desire to build the Temple than appears upon the surface. By these vic-

tories he not only strengthened his position, but he gathered treasure. The house of the Lord was still in his mind, and although he knew that he would not be permitted to build, he was yet gathering in preparation for the work of his son.

There is an exquisite tenderness about the story of David and Mephibosheth. The king's love for Jonathan was still fresh. One can easily imagine how, in the days of his growing prosperity, he would think of the old strenuous times, and his friend's loyalty to him under circumstances so full of stress and peril. For David, the house of Saul, which had done him so much harm, was redeemed by his love for Jonathan, and he instituted inquiry as to whether there were any left of that house to whom he might show kindness for the sake of his friend. This inquiry was rewarded by the finding of Mephibosheth, whose very lameness was tragic and pathetic, in that it had been caused by the flight of his nurse on the awful day of Jezreel, when his father and grandfather had fallen together. To him the king restored the lands of Saul, and set him as an honoured guest at his own table.

The record proceeds to give an account of victories gained over Ammon and Syria. Joab is revealed in all the rugged and terrible

strength of his nature. It is interesting to note that he made no allowance for the possibility of ultimate defeat in his conflict with Ammon. When arranging for the battle, he divided his forces, but did so in order that if the Syrians on the one side should be too strong for him, the people under Abishai, his brother, should help him; or if, on the other hand, the children of Ammon should be too strong for Abishai, he would help him. It does not seem to have occurred to him that the combination may have been too much for them both. This is the true quality of the soldier. We are not surprised that the issue was victory for Joab. This story constitutes the culmination of the account of David's rise to power, and prepares for the terrible story of his fall, by showing us the general circumstances under which that fall occurred.

B. David's Fall

In all the Bible there is no chapter more tragic or more full of solemn and searching warning than that which tells the story of David's fall. Carefully pondering it, we notice the logical steps downward, following in rapid succession. First David tarried at Jerusalem. It was the time of war, and his place was with the army, but he remained behind

in the sphere of temptation. In briefest quotations we may indicate the downward movement. "He saw," "he sent and inquired," "he took." The king is fallen, in answer to that inner weakness which has already been manifested as existing, from the high level of purity to that of terrible sin. His sin against Uriah, one of the bravest of his soldiers, was even more dastardly than that against Bathsheba. From the merely human standpoint the unutterable folly of the whole thing is evident, as it is seen how he put himself into the power of Joab by sharing with him his guilty secret. In a year the prophet Nathan visited him and charged him with his sin. One can almost imagine that after the year of untold misery this visit of Nathan came as a relief to the guilty man. His repentance was genuine and immediate.

The sincerity of David's repentance was manifested in his attitude in the presence of the punishment which now commenced to fall upon his head. When the child died, David worshipped. The sin of Ammon afflicted him grievously, but because it was after the pattern of his own, his arm was nerveless. Perhaps the severest suffering of all came to him through the rebellion of Absalom. The story is indeed full of tragedy. The heartlessness

and cruelty of Absalom fell like an avalanche of pain upon the heart of David, and it is a question whether he suffered more in the day of Absalom's short-lived victory or in the dark and dreadful hour of his defeat and slaying. His lament over Absalom is a perfect revelation of grief.

At last, the rebellion being quelled, the king was brought back to the kingdom, and there was a reconstruction, new officers being appointed in the different departments of state.

C. Appendix

As at the close of the first book, so here several matters are dealt with, not in chronological order or relation, but as illustrating the times which have been under consideration. This appendix contains matter which reveals the direct government of God, two utterances of David which are a revelation of his real character, and an account of some of the deeds of the mighty men, which shows the heroic spirit of the period.

The account of the famine was one written to give a purely national lesson. Saul had broken faith with the Gibeonites, and the guilt of his action had neither been recognized nor expiated. The sin of the ruling house was the sin of the people, and it is noted by God, and

must be accounted for. Hence the famine, which was only stayed when, by the sacrifice of the sons of Saul, the nation had come to consciousness of its guilt, and repented thereof.

The character of David is revealed in two psalms. In the first we find the deepest things. Such convictions as those of the absolute sovereignty of Jehovah, of His omnipotent power to deliver, of the necessity for obedience to His law, and of assurance that in the case of such obedience He ever acts for His people, constituted the underlying strength of David's character. In all likelihood the psalm was written before his sin, and if so it will readily be understood how terrible was his sorrow as he subsequently recognized his failure.

The second contains the last words of the great king. They breathe the consciousness of his own failure, and yet sing the song of the Divine faithfulness.

The reign of David was pre-eminently the heroic age in Israel's history. This is demonstrated in the whole list of the mighty men and the illustrations of their exploits which are given. It is interesting to remember that these were men who had gathered to him in Adullam, men who elsewhere are described as in debt, in danger, and discontented. They were

men possessed of natural powers which had been spoiled, but in whom such powers had been redeemed and realized.

The book closes with one other picture, reminding us of the direct government of the people by God in that He visited king and nation with punishment for the numbering of the people. It has been objected that there was nothing sinful in this taking of a census, seeing that it had been done before in the history of the people by the direct command of God. But therein lay the contrast between previous numberings and this. *They* were by the commandment of God. *This* was done from some different motive. That the act was sinful is evident from David's consciousness that it was so, and in the presence of his confession it is not for us to criticise. As we have said, the motive undoubtedly explains the sin. Perhaps, while that motive is not explicitly stated, we may gain some idea of it from the protest of Joab, "Now the Lord thy God add unto the people, how many soever they be, an hundredfold, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it: but why doth my lord the king delight in this thing?" A spirit of vain-glory in numbers had taken possession of the people and the king, and there was a tendency to trust in numbers to the forgetfulness of God. The

choice of David as to punishment again revealed his recognition both of the righteousness and tenderness of Jehovah. He willed that the stroke which was to fall should come directly from the Divine hand rather than through any intermediary.

The book ends with the story of the erection of the altar in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, and in that we see finally the man after God's own heart turning the occasion of his sin and its punishment into one of worship.

I. KINGS

I. KINGS—DISRUPTION

A THE PASSING OF DAVID i.—ii. 11	B SOLOMON *ii. 12—xi.*	C DIVISION *xii.—xvi.*	D ELIJAH *xvii.—xxii.*
I. The Rebellion of Adonijah i. 1-37	**I. "In all his Glory" ii. 12—x.** i. Solomon and the Traitors. ii. 12-46 ii. The first Divine appearing. iii. 1-15 iii. The Greatness of Solomon. iii. 16—iv. iv. His Life Work: The Temple. v.—viii. v. The second Divine appearing. ix. 1-9 vi. Material Magnificence. ix. 10—x.	**I. Rehoboam & Jeroboam xii.—xiv.** i. The Revolt of the ten Tribes. xii. ii. Warning to Jeroboam. xiii.—xiv. 20 iii. Rehoboam's reign. 21-31	**I. The Curse Pronounced xvii.**
II. The Crowning of Solomon i. 38-53.	**II. The Passing of the Glory xi.** i. Degeneracy and Doom. 1-13 ii. Execution of Judgment. 14-43	**II. Kings of Judah xv. 1-24** i. Abijam ii. Asa	**II. The Judgment of Carmel xviii.**
III. The Last Charge and Death of David ii. 1-11		**III. Kings of Israel xv. 25—xvi.** i. Nadab ii. Baasha iii. Ela iv. Zimri v. Omri vi. Ahab	**III. Elijah in the Wilderness xix** **IV. The Downfall of Ahab xx.—xxi.** i. Benhadad. xx. ii. Ahab and Naboth. xxi. 1-16 iii. Elijah pronouncing judgment. 17-29 iv. Micaiah's prediction and Ahab's death. xxii. 1-40 v. The Kings of Israel and Judah. 41-53

I. KINGS

THE two books of Kings appear in the Hebrew Bible as one. They practically cover the whole period of kingly rule over the ancient people. In the reign of Solomon the kingdom reached the height of its material magnificence. With his passing the kingship really ceased to be the medium of Divine government. The prophetic period was introduced with the appearance of Elijah. The first book may be divided thus: the Passing of David (i.-ii. 11); Solomon (ii. 12-xi.); Division (xii-xvi.); Elijah (xvii-xxii.).

A. The Passing of David

The days of David's feebleness created the opportunity for rebellion against him under Adonijah, in which Joab and Abiathar took part. In consequence of this rebellion Soloman was crowned before the passing of David. The action of Solomon toward Adonijah was characteristic of the best side of his nature. It was one in which clemency and dignified authority were blended. The last charge of David was one in which he indicated the path of safety for Solomon. It was that of abso-

lute loyalty to God. That part of it in which David referred to Joab and Shimei has been very severely criticised. Much of this criticism would be impossible if some very simple things were borne in mind. First, David knew these men by experience, and appreciated their danger to the state. Second, he had kept his covenant with them, and spared their lives. Third, in each case he left the matter of how to deal with them in the hands of Solomon, assured of his wisdom. Finally, his words concerning the death of each are prophetic rather than vindictive.

B. Solomon

This division falls into two parts, first that which reveals Solomon in all his glory, and secondly that which tells of the passing of that glory.

Among the first acts of the new king were those in which he dealt with the leading men of the kingdom in whose hearts were the impulses of treachery. There was no vindictive vengeance, but there was no vacillating weakness.

Early in his reign Jehovah appeared to Solomon in a dream. With that appearance came Solomon's great opportunity, both to manifest himself, and to obtain the best. His choice

was characterized by great wisdom, as it revealed his consciousness of personal inability for all the work devolving upon him. God gave him what he asked, and added thereto the things he might have chosen, yet showed his wisdom in passing by. The account of his choice is followed by a picture in which he is seen exercising the gift for which he had asked, and which God had granted to him.

He gave himself to a careful organization of his kingdom, gathering around him a company of officers of state, each having his own department, for which he was held responsible. These were the days of the nation's greatest material prosperity. The people lived in merriment, and dwelt safely beneath their own vines and fig-trees.

Directly he had set his kingdom in order, Solomon turned his attention to the building of the Temple. It is evident that he appreciated the real purpose of his coming to the throne. The greatness of the work may be gathered from the account of the enormous amount of labour employed. Like the Tabernacle of old, its chief splendour was within, where everything was encased in gold, neither wood nor stone being visible.

The Temple being finished, it was solemnly dedicated. With great care, and impressive

ceremony, they carried the ark into the holy of holies, and the glory of the Lord filled the house. The king offered the dedicatory prayer standing by the altar of burnt offering. Following the prayer, offerings were presented. At the close of the ceremonies the joyful people returned to their tents. It was the most perfect moment of national realization in the land. The Temple was erected, and the presence of God visibly manifested.

Jehovah now appeared to Solomon for the second time, declaring to him that his prayer was heard and answered, and urging the conditions which the people must fulfil. The material magnificence of the kingdom was marred by the admixture of failure. Cities were presented to Hiram, but he was dissatisfied with them. Cities were built within the kingdom, but they became hotbeds of evil. A commerce with other lands was established, but it became the medium of bringing into the land things which in their effect were evil. The coming of the queen of Sheba reveals how far the fame of Solomon had spread abroad. An account of the king's wealth cannot be read without the consciousness that the weaker, if not the baser, side of his nature is manifested in the abounding luxury with which he surrounded himself.

Suddenly the glory passed away, and in the rapid movements we behold his degeneracy and doom. His alliance with commercial enterprises led him into contact with surrounding peoples, and, giving himself over to Oriental custom, he allowed his heart to go after strange women. The wrong thus begun invaded higher realms. He built temples for the strange women who crowded his harem, and gradually but surely there followed the demoralization both of the king and his people, until at last the terrible words are written, "The Lord was angry with Solomon." The judgment of God began to operate immediately. Adversaries were raised up against him. At last there ended in gloom and failure a life full of promise, and that because the heart of the man turned from its loyalty to God in response to the seductions of his own sensual nature.

c. Division

Following the death of Solomon we have an appalling story of the break-up and degradation of the people covering a period of about sixty years. The kingdom was rent in twain. Jeroboam's sin cursed the whole after-history of the people. The judgment of God proceeded immediately. Its first stroke was that

of the sickness of Jeroboam's son, and in connection therewith the prophet Ahijah uttered the doom of the man, declaring that because of his sin he and all his were to be swept away. In the meantime Judah was also sinning. Thus so quickly after David, the nation was steeped in idolatry, and utterly failed to bear to the surrounding peoples the testimony to the purity of the Divine government which was the purpose for which they had been created. In Judah under Abijam the process of deterioration went forward. The corruption was not universal, for God maintained a lamp in the midst of His people. With the accession and long reign of Asa there was a halt in the downward progress. In the history of Israel the government of God can be traced, proceeding in a series of judgments against the continuity of sin which characterized the reigns of successive kings. Nadab the son of Jeroboam reigned for two years, and his influence was wholly evil. At last he was slain by Baasha, who succeeded him. He carried out the judgment of God on the house of Jeroboam by the destruction of all his sons, but for twenty-four years continued in the same line of evil. He was succeeded by Ela, a man utterly corrupt, who in turn was slain by Zimri. He carried out the judgment of God upon the

house of Baasha, and after four years of civil war died by his own hand. All this is indeed appalling. The throne of the chosen people was possessed by men of depraved character who came into power by conspiracy and murder. After the death of Zimri there was division even in the house of Israel, half of the people following Tibni, and half gathering to Omri. Victory, however, was with Omri, who for six years continued in courses of evil. He was succeeded by Ahab, who was a veritable incarnation of the forces of sin. He united Jezebel with himself in the actual throne of power. She was a woman of great strength of character, an appalling instance of the fact that a strong woman fallen is the most terrible thing in human failure. During this period there was hardly a ray of light, for although, as subsequent declarations reveal, a remnant still existed loyal to God, their testimony was overwhelmed by abounding wickedness.

D. Elijah

With the appearance of Elijah the voice of the prophet was raised to that of national importance. From this point onward in the economy of the Divine government the prophet was superior to the king. Elijah appeared with startling and dramatic suddenness. Without

apology, he declared himself the messenger of Jehovah, and at his word judgment fell upon the people. The story of the trial by fire on Carmel is full of majesty, and needs no comment. The lonely figure of Elijah is the centre of observation as with calm dignity he stood against the combined evils of a corrupt court and priesthood. His vindication by the answering fire of God was perfect. The slaughter of the prophets of Baal aroused the ire of Jezebel to such a degree that she sent a message full of fury to Elijah. The man who stood erect in the presence of such tremendous odds now fled for his life. Full of tenderness was the method of God with His overwrought and fearful servant. Attending first to his physical needs He then granted him a revelation of Himself. It was a new revelation by which Elijah found that God was in "the sound of gentle stillness." It is evident that from this time of the failure of his faith he was largely set aside. Once or twice only does he appear again in the narrative.

The rest of the book is occupied with the story of the downfall of Ahab. The first phase of it was public. Benhadad came in the pride of his arms against Samaria. By the voices of prophets Jehovah spoke to Ahab, who, acting under their direction, gained a complete

victory over his enemies. In the very moment of triumph he failed by making a covenant with a man whom God had devoted to destruction. The next step was that of his sin in connection with the vineyard of Naboth. Elijah suddenly presented himself before the king, and in words that must have scorched his inner soul he pronounced upon him the terrible doom of his wrongdoing. The third and final movement in the downfall was that of his disobedience to the message of Micaiah. The arrow, shot at a venture so far as man was concerned, found its true mark. Thus ended the personal career of the worst man that ever occupied the throne of the chosen people.

II. KINGS

II. KINGS—CORRUPTION

A ELISHA *i.—ix.*	B CORRUPTION *x.—xvii.*	C HEZEKIAH AND JOSIAH *xviii.—xxiii. 30*	D CAPTIVITY *xxiii. 31—xxv.*
I. Elijah i. i. The sin and sickness of Ahaziah ii. Elijah on behalf of God iii. The judgment of fire	**I. Israel x.** i. The zeal of Jehu. 1-28 ii. The failure of Jehu. 29-36	**I. Hezekiah xviii.—xx.** i. His Accession and Character. xviii. 1-12 ii. The coming of Sennacherib. xviii. 13-37 iii. Hezekiah Isaiah Victory. xix. iv. The last things. xx.	**I. Tributary xxiii. 31—xxiv. 7** Egypt. Babylon.
II. Elijah and Elisha ii. 1-18 i. The translation of Elijah ii. The succession of Elisha	**II. Judah xi., xii.** i. Athaliah and Jehoash. xi. ii. Jehoash. xii.	**II. The Reaction xxi.** i. Manasseh. 1-18 ii. Amon. 19-26	**II. Beginning of Captivity xxiv. 8-20**
III. Elisha ii. 19—ix. i. Healing of the waters of Jericho. ii. 19-22 ii. Punishment of mocking Children. 23-25 iii. The sign at the war with Moab. iii. iv. Wonders. iv.—vii. v. The restoration of the Shunammite's Land. viii. 1-6 vi. Foretells Benhadad's death. 7-15 vii. Final Events. viii. 16—ix.	**III. Israel xiii.** i. Jehoahaz. Jehoash ii. Death of Elisha	**III. Josiah xxii.—xxiii. 30** i. The finding of the Law. xxii. ii. Reform and death. xxiii. 1-30	**III. Carried away. xxv.**
	IV. Judah xiv. 1-22. i. Amaziah ii. Azariah		
	V. Israel xiv. 23.—xv. 12 i. Jeroboam II. xiv. 23-28 ii. Zechariah. xiv. 29—xv. 12		
	VI. Israel and Judah xv. 13—xvi. 20 i. Israel's throne. xv. 13-31 ii. Judah's troubles. xv. 32—xvi. 20		
	VII. Passing of Israel xvii. i. Victory of Assyria. 1-23 ii. Samaria colonized. 24-41		

II. KINGS

THE first book of Kings ended with the dark days immediately following the death of Ahab, and the passing into comparative obscurity of Elijah. This book centres first around Elisha. The course of corruption to captivity is then traced in sections alternating between Israel and Judah. Conspicuous breaks in the history are caused by the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah. For purposes of survey we may divide the book into four sections: Elisha (i.-ix.); Corruption (x.-xvii.); Hezekiah and Josiah (xvii.-xxiii. 30); Captivity (xxiii. 31-xxv.).

A. Elisha

The book opens with the story of the sin and sickness of Ahaziah, who sought counsel from Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron. Elijah, who had been in seclusion, suddenly appeared, and protested against the action of the king. Twice Ahaziah attempted to capture him, and in each case the answer of God on behalf of His servant was the swift judgment of fire.

There is something pathetic and almost weird in the last stories of Elijah. It would

seem as though he tried to escape into loneliness for that passing which he knew was at hand. Elisha, upon whom his mantle had already been cast, followed him loyally, determined to stand by him. Having witnessed his translation, he at once commenced his own ministry, and two incidents are recorded, one beneficent, the healing of the waters, and the other punitive, the destruction of the children. The last is misinterpreted if looked upon as an act of personal vengeance. It was rather an evidence of the sacredness of his office, and of the sin of refusing him as the messenger of God.

The ministry of Elisha stands in many respects in vivid contrast to that of Elijah. There is a gentleness about it which, in spite of ourselves, reminds us of the Messiah in His day. Instead of suddenly appearing at critical moments with thunder and a flame, he seems to have moved about amongst the people doing good wherever he came. Incidents follow each other in quick succession. He made provision for the need of the widow whose creditors were threatening her. He showed kindness to the Shunammite woman who had showed him hospitality. At Gilgal he healed the pottage, and fed a hundred men with twenty loaves. During all this time he

was at the head of the prophetic school; and journeying from place to place, became known everywhere as the messenger of God. The simplicity of his life is suggested by the provision which the Shunammite woman, wealthy though she was, made for his evident requirements. His apartment was a little chamber on the wall, containing a bed and a table, a stool and a candlestick. His dignity is manifest in the attitude towards him, especially of this woman, who in her converse with him, stood ever in the doorway, recognizing the sacredness of his office.

The account of the healing of Naaman reveals Elisha's perpetual attitude of dignified loyalty to God. He rebuked the king, who was filled with fear at the coming of Naaman. He demanded on the part of Naaman absolute obedience, while he refused to take anything in the nature of personal reward for that which had been wrought by the hand of God.

The incident of the swimming of the iron axe-head is interesting, but quite secondary. In the hour of national peril Elisha rose above the gentler works which chiefly characterized his ministry. Revealing the plans of the Syrians, he saved his people from peril, and finally foretold the relief of Samaria. The influence

of Elisha is incidentally seen in the converse of the king with Gehazi, and the restoration of the lands of the Shunammite woman for the sake of the prophet. Visiting Damascus, he foretold the death of Benhadad, and Hazael's share in the future suffering of Israel.

The story of Judah's corruption is then told, and that of the anointing of Jehu, and his carrying out of the purpose of Divine judgment in the case of the house of Ahab.

B. Corruption

The story of the rapid and fearful corruption of the whole nation alternates between Israel and Judah. Both sections of the nation are seen sinking deeper and ever deeper into sin and decay. Jehu was used as the scourge of God in sweeping out Ahab's posterity, and in breaking and destroying the power of Baalism. His own story was, however, one of personal failure. The reign of Jehoash in Judah lasted for forty years. All that was beneficent in it would seem to have been due directly to the influence of Jehoiada the priest, for "he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord all his days wherein Jehoiada the priest instructed him."

In Israel the story of the process of corruption continued under Jehoahaz. He was

succeeded by Jehoash, in whose reign Elisha died.

Turning back to Judah we find Amaziah on the throne. Success attended his arms, but issued in the lifting up of his heart, and his foolish challenge of Jehoash, king of Israel. Defeated, he seems to have been kept a prisoner until the death of Jehoash, and was then succeeded by Azariah, the Uzziah of Isaiah's prophecy.

There follows a section in which Israel and Judah are both seen. Jeroboam the Second occupied the throne of Israel, and in his reign Jonah, the son of Amittai, exercised his ministry. The throne of Judah was occupied by Uzziah, whose reign was in the main characterized by obedience to the Divine will. Yet the people continued to sin, and the king was smitten with leprosy. Turning to Israel, we have the chronicle of a period the most terrible in all its history. To the throne man succeeded man by the way of murder. Zechariah was slain by Shallum. After a month's occupancy of the throne, Shallum was slain by Menahem, who reigned for ten years in evil courses. He was at last succeeded by Pekahiah, his son, who, after reigning for two years in persistent evil, was slain by Pekah. He occupied the throne for twenty years, but at last

was slain by Hoshea. Israel was practically under a military despotism, downtrodden and oppressed, and sinning with high hand against God.

The state of affairs was very little better in Judah. Jotham followed Uzziah, and was in turn succeeded by Ahaz, during whose reign the sin of Judah had its most terrible expression. Isaiah was uttering his message, and Micah also, but so far as the nation or its kings were concerned the testimony of truth was lost, and the name of God was being blasphemed among the heathen.

In Israel Hoshea was the last of the kings. The stroke of Divine judgment, long hanging over the guilty people, fell. Shalmaneser first made them tributary, and after three years carried them away captive.

c. Hezekiah and Josiah

The third division of the book includes the story of the reigns of Hezekiah and Josiah, with a period of reaction and sin between the two. Hezekiah did right in the sight of the Lord, and instituted reforms more widespread and drastic than had been attempted by any of his predecessors. It was during his reign, in the sixth year, that Israel was carried away into captivity. This in itself would have an

influence upon Judah for a time at least, as there is no doubt that the prophets would carefully point out the real reason of this judgment.

When he had occupied the throne for fourteen years a most formidable foe appeared in the person of Sennacherib. In the hour of peril he turned to his old and trusted friend, Isaiah, who charged him to pray for that remnant of God's people which still remained. He also foretold the judgment which would fall upon Assyria, which prophecy was fulfilled in the destruction of the army, while Sennacherib escaped to Nineveh, only to be slain at the house of his own god. The last things in the life of Hezekiah were manifestations of his weakness. Yet his reign was in many respects a most remarkable one. Everything seemed to be against him, and yet the story reveals how much one man seriously loyal to truth may accomplish in the midst of most adverse and difficult circumstances.

Then comes the acount of reaction, which was manifested in two reigns both utterly evil, that of Manasseh lasting for fifty-five years, and that of Amon lasting for two. Manasseh's sin was not merely one of personal wrong-doing, but also of the deliberate undoing of what his father had been at such pains

to accomplish. After a brief reign of two years Amon was slain by his servants.

With the accession of Josiah there came the last attempt at reformation before the final sweeping away into captivity. His first act was that of the restoration of the Temple. In connection with it came the discovery of the book of the law. The condition of affairs in Judah may be gathered from the fact of such a finding. So sadly was the Temple neglected and deserted that it would seem as though neither king nor priest knew of the whereabouts of this book. The reformation proceeded along deeper lines as the result of its discovery. So far as Josiah was concerned the whole procedure was the outcome of sincerity and loyalty. The people, however, were following the lead of the king. There was no turning on their part to God; and consequently there was no turning on the part of God from His purpose of judgment. Josiah was gathered to rest before the falling of the final stroke.

D. Captivity

The judgments fell at last in rapid succession. Jehoahaz succeeded to the throne, and, notwithstanding all that had been done during the reign of Josiah, returned immediately to evil courses in his brief reign of three months.

He was deposed by the king of Egypt, and Jehoiakim was set upon the throne as tributary to Pharaoh. For eleven years, as the vassal of Egypt, he continued in evil courses. He became tributary to Babylon under Nebuchadnezzar. Finally Jehoiachin, who succeeded Jehoiakim, was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, and in his place Zedekiah was made ruler as the representative and vassal of Nebuchadnezzar. His occupancy of the position lasted for eleven years, during which he also continued in evil courses. In process of time he rebelled against the king of Babylon, and was captured. The picture of this man is tragic and awful. With eyes put out, and bound in fetters, he was carried to the court of his conqueror, the type and symbol of the condition of the people who had rebelled against God, and had been broken in pieces.

Thus on the human side the record ends in tragic and disastrous failure. To those whose eyes are fixed upon the eternal throne it is certain that the Divine purpose must be accomplished. The people had passed into a period of long years of servitude and suffering, during which they were still watched over by their one and only King, and by these very conditions prepared for co-operation according to the covenant of grace in the ultimate movements of the overruling God.

I. CHRONICLES

I. CHRONICLES—

THE TEMPLE, DESIRED AND APPROACHED

A
GENEALOGIES
i.—x.

I. General
The Nations **i.**

i. Beginnings. Adam to Ishmael. 1-28
ii. Related to Israel. 29-54

II. Particular
The Chosen **ii.—x.**

i. Sons of Israel. ii. 1-2
ii. Judah. ii. 3—iv. 23
iii. Simeon. Reuben. Gad. Manasseh. iv. 24—v.
iv. Levi. vi.
v. Issachar. Benjamin. Naphtali. Manasseh. Ephraim. Asher. vii.
vi. Benjamin. viii.
vii. Conclusion. ix., x.

B
DAVID
xi.—xxix.

I. David made King **xi., xii.**

i. The Crowning at Hebron. xi. 1-3.
ii. The Taking of Jebus. 4-9
iii. The Mighty Men. 10-47
iv. The Gathering of the People. xii.

II. The Ark **xiii.—xvii.**

i. From Kiriath-jearim to House of Obed-edom. xiii.
Death of Uzza.
ii. Parenthesis. xiv.
iii. From Obed-edom to Jerusalem. xv.—xvi. 6
Michal's Contempt
iv. Parenthesis xvi. 7-43
The Psalm
v. Desire to Build a Home for the Ark. xvii.
Nathan

III. David's Reign **xviii.—xxi.**

i. Victories and Gathering of Treasure for Temple. xviii.—xx.
ii. The Numbering of the People. xxi.

IV. The Temple **xxii.—xxix.**

i. The Site. xxii. 1
ii. Preparation of Material. 2-5
iii. Charge to Solomon. 6-16
iv. Charge to Princes. 17-19
v. Arrangements of Levites. xxiii., xxiv.
vi. Arrangements of Song Service. xxv.
vii. Arrangements of Porters. xxvi. 1-19
viii. Arrangements of Keepers of Treasure. 20-32
Parenthesis. Internal Order of the Kingdom. xxvii.
ix. The Final Charge. xxviii.
x. The Ceremony of Giving. xxix. 1-25
xi. Death of David. 26-30

I. CHRONICLES

THE two books of Chronicles cover the period of history already studied in I. and II. Kings. They record this history, however, from an entirely different standpoint. The outlook is almost exclusively confined to Judah, the chronicler never referring to Israel save in cases of absolute necessity. Within the tribe of Judah, moreover, the history is that of the house of David, all other matters being referred to only as they affect, or are affected by, the Davidic line. Moreover, the story of these two books centres around the Temple. The chief matter in David's reign is his interest in preparing for it, while in Solomon's the chief interest is in the building thereof. The distinctive note of the books is that of religion and its bearing on the national life. In the first certain genealogies are given, which lead up to David, and proceed from him. Then the story of his time is told in its relation, pre-eminently, to the religious life. It has been truly said that while the Kings describe the history from the prophetic standpoint, the Chronicles describe it from the priestly. The book may be divided

into two parts: Genealogies (i.-x.), David (xi.-xxix.).

A. Genealogies

The period included in these genealogical tables is that from Adam to the restoration under Nehemiah, which are not exhaustive, but serve a clearly defined purpose in that they indicate the Divine choice of the channels through which God moved to the accomplishment of His purpose. Side issues are traced in certain directions, but only as they touch upon the line of the Divine progress. This fact is illustrated at the very beginning. The only son of Adam mentioned is Seth. Through him the line is traced through Enoch to Noah. Then the genealogies of Japheth and Ham are given because of the relationship of their descendants to the chosen people of God. The direct line of the Divine movement is taken up through Shem, and finds a new departure in Abram. There is another digression from Abram in the tracing of the descent through Ishmael, and also that through the sons of Keturah. The direct procession continues through Isaac. A third excursion traces the descendants of Esau. Through Israel the programme is carried forward. His twelve sons are mentioned, and all of them are subse-

quently referred to except Dan and Zebulun. The direct line of interest in tracing the Divine method passes through Judah, and so on through Jesse to David. Of his sons nineteen are named, but further descent is traced through Solomon and the kings of Judah on to the period of captivity. In tracing these genealogies it is interesting to notice how choice is based upon character; and moreover, how in the Divine progress there is constant deviation from the line of merely natural descent. The actual firstborn of the sons of Israel was Reuben, but he through sin forfeited the birthright, which passed to Joseph. And yet again, the Prince foretold was to come, not through Joseph, though to him had been given the birthright, but through Judah.

A long section is devoted to the priestly tribe. In the final movement the genealogies of each of the sons of Levi culminated in the person of one man, that of Kohath in Heman, that of Gershom in Asaph, that of Merari in Ethan. This division ends with the story of the death of the king chosen by men. It is a terrible picture of a man of magnificent capability going down in utter ruin. Routed by his enemies, he died by his own hand in the midst of the field of defeat. The reason of such failure is clearly declared. He trespassed

against God, and then sought counsel of one who had a familiar spirit. Magnificent indeed was the ruin, but it was ruin. Saul was a man than whom no other had greater opportunities, but his failure was disastrous. Of good standing in the nation, distinctly called and commissioned by God, honoured with the friendship of Samuel, surrounded by a band of men whose hearts God had touched, everything was in his favour. From the beginning he failed, and step by step passed along a decline of conduct and character until he passed away, having failed himself, and dragged his nation to such confusion as threatened its very existence.

B. David

In this division of the book there are four movements: the story of David's crowning, events connected with the ark of God, the account of his reign, and matters concerning the building of the Temple.

The chronicler passes over in silence the story of the seven years in which David reigned over Judah, and commences with the crowning at Hebron. Immediately he had thus been recognized as king of the whole nation he captured Jebus, which became the city of his heart, and the metropolis of the nation.

The account of the mighty men and their deeds is full of colour. It is particularly interesting in view of what these men were in the days of David's exile. From being a company in debt, in danger, and discontented, they became "mighty men of valour . . . trained for war," their one unifying inspiration being their loyalty to David. They "came with a perfect heart to Hebron, to make David king." Thus he entered upon his kingdom under the most auspicious circumstances.

The king's consciousness of the true strength of his kingdom is manifest in his anxiety concerning the ark of God. It had been at Kiriath-jearim, and neglected for long years. He now set himself to bring it into the midst of the people as a recognition of the nation's relationship to Jehovah. The long neglect of the ark would seem to have rendered the people unfamiliar with all the particular regulations for its removal, which they attempted by a device of their own. The swift judgment on the man who stretched out a hand to save the ark is evidence at once of the presence of God among His people, and of the necessity for perfect conformity to His minutest instructions.

At this time there commenced a commercial friendship with Hiram, which continued into the reign of Solomon. The statement is now

made of David's multiplication of wives. The silence of the chronicler concerning his sin is remarkable throughout this book. Two victories over the Philistines are described.

Again David turned his attention to the ark, bringing it up from the house of Obed-edom to Jerusalem. Companies of instrumentalists and singers accompanied the ark, and with high jubilation it was borne by the priests into the tent prepared. One shadow fell across the brightness of the day. It was that of the mockery of Michal, Saul's daughter. The incident illustrates the perpetual inability of the worldly-minded to appreciate the gladness of the spiritual. The chronicler gives us the psalm sung by the trained musicians on this occasion. It is a compilation of parts of three to be found in our Psalter, and is a general ascription of praise, merging into a call to remember the works of God, and His government covenant with the people.

The presence of the ark in the city seems to have created the desire in the heart of David to provide for it a permanent and more worthy resting-place. Of this desire he spoke to Nathan, who, acting without Divine consultation, charged him to go forward. Both prophet and king, however, had to learn that God's ways are not man's ways. While David's desire was

not granted, yet, when in communion with God, he had been brought to the place of a resting worshipper, he was permitted to make great preparation for the building of the Temple by his son.

The next section tells the story of David's reign, and first gives the account of his victories over surrounding foes. In view of his desire to build the Temple of God, it is of special interest to notice how in all these wars he was amassing treasure with that end in view. The victories of David were the direct result of God's blessing upon him. Yet in the midst of them he sinned his greatest sin, and that notwithstanding the fact that in his deepest heart he desired to build God's house. One statement in this book is all that in any sense can be construed into a reference to that sin. "But David tarried at Jerusalem."

The cause of David's action in numbering the people is distinctly stated to be Satan. Therein lies a revelation of its nature. The one sin of Satan is that of pride and ambition, and this was the sin of David. In the place where the mercy of God operated in staying the plague resulting from his sin, David chose to build the house of his God. The threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite was chosen as the site of the Temple.

During the latter days of his life the deep underlying desire became again the supreme matter. In perfect acquiescence with the will of God, he gave up all thought of building, and set himself to preparing everything for another hand to carry out the work. His charge to his son is full of beauty. He frankly told him how God refused to permit him to build, and named the reason. He was careful, moreover, to teach Solomon that his appointment to build was of God, and thereby created a solemn sense of responsibility in the matter.

His interest in the Temple was not only manifested in his material preparation. He practically abdicated the throne to Solomon in order to supervise the setting in order of the worship. Arrangements were made for the work of the Levites, and with great care and remarkable democracy of choice the courses of the priests were next set in order.

It is easy to imagine what delight the poet-king took in arranging the song service of the new Temple. Music had played a very important part in his career. His skill therein had been his first introduction to Saul. His psalms breathe the spirit of the varied experiences through which he passed. The days of his simple life as a shepherd, the period of his exile and suffering, the hours of battle and

weariness, the triumph of his crowning, the agony of his sin, the joy of pardon—these and many other experiences are reflected in the great collection. And now at the end he gave himself to arranging the service of song in the Temple which was to be built. Finally he arranged the courses of the porters, and the duties of such as had charge of all the stores set apart for the sacred work.

Before coming to the last charges of David, in a parenthetical section (chap. xxvii.), we have an idea of the internal order of the kingdom under the government of David. This chapter is a striking revelation of the fact that the greatness of David as a king was not confined to his victories in war. He was no less great in the arts of peaceful administration. The tilling of the ground, and its careful cultivation, the rearing of cattle, and all matters pertaining to the internal welfare of his people were arranged for under duly qualified and appointed oversight. There is no doubt that under the reign of David the Hebrew people realized their greatest strength, even though they did not reach the height of their material magnificence. Fundamentally a man of God, David was also a warrior, a poet, and an administrator, and with his passing the day of Hebrew greatness passed its meridian.

The book ends with an account of the solemn charge he gave to Solomon, and of the ceremony in which he gave to the Lord all that he had gathered for the carrying out of the work of the Temple. Finally the chronicler declares that David "died in a good old age, full of days, riches, and honour." It had been in very truth a great reign. Through varied experiences the king had come at last to the highest that was in him, and, as Paul declared, "after he had in his own generation served the counsel of God, he fell on sleep."

II. CHRONICLES

II. CHRONICLES—

THE TEMPLE, POSSESSED AND ABANDONED

A SOLOMON *i.—ix.*	B THE KINGS OF JUDAH *x.—xxxvi.*	
I. First Vision and Things Following i.—vii. 10	**I. The Revolt of the Ten Tribes x.—xi. 4**	
i. The Vision. i. 1-13	**II. Period of Degeneracy xi. 5—xvi.**	i. Rehoboam. xi. 5—xii. ii. Abijah. xiii. iii. Asa. xiv.—xvi.
ii. National Prosperity. i. 14—ii. 18	**III. Reform under Jehoshaphat xvii.—xx.**	i. Reform. xvii. ii. Lapse and Restoration. xviii., xix. iii. Prevailing Prayer. xx.
iii. The Temple iii.—v. 1	**IV. Period of Degeneracy xxi.—xxiii.**	i. Jehoram. xxi. ii. Ahaziah. xxii. 1-9 iii. Athaliah. xxii. 10—xxiii.
iv. Ceremonies of Consecration v. 2—vii. 10	**V. Reform under Joash xxiv.**	i. Influence of Jehoida ii. Failure of Joash
II. Second Vision and Things Following vii. 11—ix.	**VI. Period of Degeneracy xxv.—xxviii.**	i. Amaziah. xxv. ii. Uzziah. xxvi. iii. Jotham. xxvii. iv. Ahaz. xxviii.
i. The Second Vision. vii. 11-22	**VII. Reform under Hezekiah xxix.—xxxii.**	i. Consciousness of Sin and consequent Cleansing. xxix. ii. The Passover. xxx. iii. Practical Reforms. xxxi. iv. The Trial of Faith. Sennacherib. xxxii.
ii. Various Acts of the King. viii.	**VIII. Period of Degeneracy xxxiii.**	i. Manasseh. 1-20 ii. Amon. 21-25
iii. The Queen of Sheba. ix. 1-28	**IX. Reform under Josiah xxxiv., xxxv.**	i. Josiah's first Reforms. ii. The Finding of the Book of the Law. iii. The Passover.
iv. Epilogue. 29—31	**X. Period of Degeneracy xxxvi. 1-10**	i. Jehoahaz. 1-4 ii. Jehoiakim. 5-8
	XI. Captivity xxxvi. 11-23	iii. Jehoiachin. 9-10

II. CHRONICLES

THIS is really the second half of the one Book of Chronicles. The essential values are the same as those in I. Chronicles. The history centres round the religious life of the people, and is confined to Judah and the Davidic line of kings. Degeneracy resulted from neglect of the house of God, and each reform was associated with return thereto. The story is a very sad one, opening with all the glory of Solomon's reign, and ending with captivity and the patronage of Cyrus. Its broad divisions are Solomon (i.-ix.); the Kings of Judah (x.-xxxvi.).

A. Solomon

This book opens with the story of Solomon's entering upon full possession of his kingdom, and taking up the great work entrusted to him of building the Temple. He commenced by gathering the people with him to a sacred act of worship. God met him in a special vision of the night, as a result of which wisdom was granted to him, and the promise was made of great material prosperity. Then followed the days of Israel's greatest glory so

far as material things were concerned. Prosperity is always a more insidious danger than adversity to the man of faith.

Solomon devoted himself to his great work of building the Temple. In all fundamental essentials it was on the pattern of the Tabernacle which Moses had made. Its proportions and relations were identical, but it was larger. The period occupied in building was seven years. The work being completed, with filial and godly care the king carried into the sacred enclosure all that his father had collected and dedicated to the purpose. Thus, nearly half a millennium after the Exodus, the chosen people were found in the land, having a king on the throne, and a Temple in the midst of the chief city at the centre of the national life. The only principles of permanence, however, are faithfulness and purity, and already the elements of decay were at work in the heart of the king and among the people.

The work of construction being completed, there followed the glad and solemn ceremony of dedication by the people, and consecration by God. With awe-inspiring dignity the ark of God was carried to its resting-place. As at the erection of the Tabernacle of old, so now in the new Tabernacle God answered the work of man as the cloud of glory possessed and

filled the sacred place, so that the ministrations of the priests had to cease. In the presence of that manifestation the king pronounced a blessing on the people, which merged into a blessing offered to God. After praise the king offered his prayer, which was great in its comprehensiveness and in its understanding of the heart of God. As the ceremonies had begun with sacrifice and song, so they closed, and it is quite easy to realize how joyful and glad of heart the people were as they dispersed.

The greatest work of Solomon's life being now completed, God appeared to him in a second vision, in which He first declared that the work done was accepted, and the prayer offered heard and answered. Then, with the tenderness and faithfulness of infinite love, He restated for the king the conditions of his safety.

Then follows the record of certain doings of the king in matters of administration. He consolidated the internal strength of the nation by building cities. He organized the labour of the conquered peoples within his dominions. He set in order the Temple worship. He enlarged his commercial activities.

The fame of Solomon's wisdom attracted the queen of Sheba, who came principally to

discuss with him certain problems on her mind. He welcomed her with fine courtesy, and answered her questions to her satisfaction. The chronicler ends the story with the account of the wealth Solomon gathered, and the magnificence which characterized his reign. No account of his failure and fall is given. The purpose of the writer was served when he had made clear the relationship existing between loyalty to the Temple of God, with its worship and success, and the greatness of king and people.

B. The Kings of Judah

Despotism is seldom transmissible. That Solomon had been an autocrat, and had ruled with a hand of iron under the glove of velvet, is evidenced by the words of the men of Israel: "Thy father made our yoke grievous." With his death men breathed anew, and discovered their chains. As a result of the quarrel between Jeroboam and Rehoboam, the nation was rent in twain. Ten tribes revolted, and the history of the book gathers round the kings of Judah, beginning with Rehoboam. Throughout his reign, and that of Abijah, there was war between Israel and Judah, and a process of corruption in the kingdom. Asa reigned for a long period, and in the earlier

years gave the nation some gleams of a better order. In the latter years, however, he sadly failed, turning to Syria for help.

With the accession of Jehoshaphat, a period of definite reformation opened for Judah. He commenced by organizing what in these days would be called special missions conducted through the cities of Judah by representative princes, the Levites, and the priests. Coincident with this activity within, a remarkable fear of the Lord fell upon the peoples without, so that they ceased to make war upon Jehoshaphat. Economically he strengthened his kingdom by the building of castles and cities, by commerce, and by the carrying out of many works. After a while he had a strange lapse in his loyalty to God, in that he made affinity with Ahab, perhaps the most evil king that ever sat upon the throne of Israel. His repentance, however, was manifest in the new mission which he presently undertook throughout the land, to bring his people back to the Lord, and to consolidate the internal administration in righteousness.

He was undoubtedly a man of simple and yet splendid faith. This is seen in the story of how, when his kingdom was threatened with powerful and terrible invasion, he gathered his people about him and prayed. The answer

was not delayed. It was a moment bright with light amid the darkness. Once more in the history of His own people the arm of the Lord was seen acting in strength, as when in the ancient days it broke the power of Egypt. The story of Jehoshaphat's life and reign concludes with a brief statement of yet another lapse, in that he made commercial alliances with Ahaziah, the king of Israel. His enterprises were unsuccessful, because God broke his ships in pieces.

With the passing of Jehoshaphat another period of degeneracy and darkness set in over the kingdom of Judah. He was succeeded by his firstborn, Jehoram, a man of utterly evil nature, who attempted to make his throne secure by the murder of his brothers. In the midst of his wickedness a message came to him by writing from Elijah. It was a terrible sentence of judgment, which was fully carried out after eight years of reign. He was immediately succeeded by Ahaziah, his youngest son, whose brief reign of one year was influenced for evil by Athaliah, his mother. Dark and terrible days followed his death, during which this woman, Athaliah, reigned over the land. Her first act was that of the destruction of all the seed royal of the house of Judah, except Joash, who was rescued, and for six years

preserved within the temple by Jehoshabeath, and the high priest, Jehoiada.

The reform under Joash was really due to the influence of this man Jehoiada. It centres, as always in this book, around the Temple. While Jehoiada lived, worship was maintained, but after his death the king who had been zealous in reform became determined in wickedness.

The account of the reign of Amaziah opens with a remarkable statement: "He did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, but not with a perfect heart." Notwithstanding the general direction of his life, either through personal indulgence or ambition or carelessness, the whole heart was not set upon doing the will of God, and consequently the reign was characterized by failure. Uzziah, who succeeded him, and reigned fifty-two years, was a man of strong character, and the early part of his occupancy of the throne was characterized by true prosperity. The last years of his reign were full of suffering and sadness. In an evil moment of pride he entered into the sacred courts, and violated the ancient order of God concerning the offering of sacrifices. He was smitten with leprosy, and lived for the latter part of his life a prisoner, isolated from his fellow-men. He was succeeded

by Jotham, who reigned in equity, and refrained from his father's sin. During the whole of this period, however, the corruption of Judah went forward, and the great ministry of Isaiah commenced. The reign of Ahaz was marked by terrible and rapid degeneracy. With appalling fearlessness he restored all the evils of idolatry, even including the terrible offering of children to Moloch. The evil of his character is manifest in the fact that calamities did not seem to have the effect of rousing him to consciousness of his sin. "In the time of his distress did he trespass yet more against the Lord, this same king Ahaz."

With the accession of Hezekiah a great change came over the life of Judah. Among all the reforming kings he was undoubtedly the most remarkable. This was in all probability due to the influence of Isaiah. His reformation commenced in his own deep consciousness of the wretched condition of the people, and the reason thereof. His first reforming act was that of cleansing the house of God, and restoring it as the place of worship. He then made arrangements for the keeping of the Passover, and with a largeness of heart sent messengers throughout Israel, inviting them to come and take part therein. Only a remnant responded. The observance of the feast was followed by the work of re-

organization in the nation. The story is told in general terms, and special note is made of the thoroughness with which the king carried out the work. "In every work that he began to do in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered." Then came a trial of his faith in the invasion of Sennacherib. In the presence of the peril his heart did not fail. He acted with promptitude by stopping the supply of water, by strengthening the fortifications, by mobilizing his army, and then sought refuge in prayer and in fellowship with the prophet Isaiah. The chronicler then briefly relates the story of his illness, and of that failure which characterized his last days.

Manasseh the son of Hezekiah seems to have set himself to the most wilful and persistent form of every abomination. The strong hand of God was stretched out against him, and he was carried away in irons, broken and defeated. In his distress he cried out for help to God. His repentance was evidently the chief subject in the mind of the chronicler, and constitutes a wonderful picture of the readiness of God to pardon. Amon, on coming to the throne, followed the earlier example of his father, and was so utterly corrupt that his own servants conspired against him and slew him.

The story of the reign of Josiah is full of brightness. Ascending the throne when eight years old, at the age of sixteen he began to seek after God. Four years later he set himself to the actual work of reformation. It was during the cleansing of the Temple that the book of the law was discovered, the result of which was a still greater determination on his part to reform the nation. He observed the Passover. Following the story of his death, we read of the lamentation of the people. The reformation under him was due entirely to their love for him, and not to any return on their part to God.

The story of final movements in the downward course of the nation concludes the book. Jehoahaz reigned for three months. He was deposed by the king of Egypt, who appointed Jehoiakim. After eleven years of evil courses he was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon. He was succeeded by Jehoiachin, who also was carried away by Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah, appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to the succession, rebelled against him, and continued his evil courses for eleven years. The Chaldeans carried the remnant away to Babylon. The book closes with the statement of the proclamation of Cyrus, which also opens the book of Ezra.

EZRA

EZRA—A RETURNING REMNANT

A ZERUBBABEL *i.—vi.*		B EZRA *vii.—x.*	
I. Return	**i., ii.**	**I. Return**	**vii., vii**
i. The Edict of Cyrus.	i.	Interval of Sixty Years.	
ii. The Returning Exiles.	ii.	i. The Coming of Ezra.	vi
Note :		ii. The Returning Exiles.	viii. 1-1
The Small Number of Levites.		iii. The Preliminary Convention.	15-3
The Nethinim.		iv. The Return.	31-3
The Totals.			
II. Reorganisation	**iii.—vi.**	**II. Reformation**	**ix., x**
i. Resumption of Worship.	iii.	i. The Conditions in Jerusalem.	ix. 1,
ii. Opposition.	iv.	ii. Ezra's Intercession.	3-
a. General Statement.	1-6	iii. The Reformation.	
b. Particular Account.	7-42		
iii. Resumption of Building.	v.		
iv. Darius.	vi.		

EZRA

THE book of Ezra contains an account of a most important epoch in the history of the people of God. After seventy years of captivity, through the decree of a Gentile king, a return was made possible. This book gives us the story of that return, and of the rebuilding of the Temple. It is not consecutive history, for, while in conjunction with the book of Nehemiah it covers a period of about one hundred years, there is in the midst of this book a gap of sixty years. There are two main divisions: first, the story of the return under Zerubbabel and the rebuilding of the Temple (i.-vi.); then, after sixty years, that of the coming of Ezra, and the work he undertook (vii.-x). It may therefore be simply divided around the names of these two men.

A. Zerubbabel

The story which centres around Zerubbabel is that of the return of a remnant of the people to Jerusalem, and their reorganization.

The purposes of God may seem to tarry; they are never abandoned. Indeed, there is a very true sense in which they never even tarry

for a moment. The chosen nation had become a people scattered and peeled, having lost national position and power, and to a large extent national consciousness. Through the seventy years God prepared a remnant, through processes of suffering, to return and rebuild, and hold the fort until He, the true Seed and Servant, should come. The history of the return sets forth clearly the truth concerning this overruling of God. Through a most unlikely instrument, Cyrus, the way was made plain.

The list of those returning is principally remarkable from the small number of the Levites it contains. Nearly ten times as many priests as Levites went back to the land. Another point is that of the Nethinim. They seem to have been prominent in these times, for they are only once mentioned elsewhere. It is almost impossible to determine their origin.

The leaders in this return were evidently conscious of the matters of real importance in the life of the people. Directly they were settled in their cities, the altar of God was established at Jerusalem. As far as possible they restored the Divinely appointed order of worship, and immediately commenced the work of rebuilding the Temple. The founda-

tions were laid, and in the second year of the return, with fitting ceremonies of praise, they rejoiced.

This work stirred up the opposition of the Samaritans. This was first manifested in an attempt to induce Zerubbabel and those associated with him to admit into partnership such as were really enemies of the work. This being definitely refused, these enemies set themselves in every way to harass the work and hinder it, until at last they were successful in obtaining letters from the reigning monarch which interdicted the work. Thus for a long period the rebuilding of the house of God ceased, while the building of the houses of the people went forward unchecked.

A study of the prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah make it perfectly evident that the cessation of the work of building was unworthy of the men who had commenced. Judged by all human standards, they could fairly urge the difficulties of the situation, and the necessity for obedience to the edict of the reigning king. Judged by the Divine standard, as the burning words of the prophets made perfectly clear, they had no right to cease. Under the inspiration of these prophetic messages, governor and priest, Zerubbabel and Jeshua, commenced the work again. Again

opposition was raised. To this they gave no heed, and Tattenai sent a letter to Darius concerning the edict of Cyrus.

There can be no doubt that Tattenai felt that the finding of such a decree was unlikely, if not impossible. That the search was a thorough one is indicated by the statement of where the roll was found. The searchers naturally commenced in the house of the archives in Babylon. It was not there, but at Achmetha, in the royal palace, that it was discovered. In consequence of this the edict of Darius not only gave them permission to carry forward their work, but compelled Tattenai to help them with great gifts. At last the Temple was finished, and solemnly dedicated to God with sacrificial offerings and songs of thanksgiving.

B. Ezra

Between chapters vi. and vii. there was an interval of at least sixty years, uneventful in the history of the people settled in Jerusalem. That they had largely failed in the purposes of Zerubbabel is evident from the work done by Ezra, and subsequently by Nehemiah. Again the wonderful overruling of God is seen in the working of the minds of two men in Babylon. Ezra was stirred with desire to

help his people in Jerusalem. Artaxerxes was moved with fear lest there should be "wrath against the realm of the king and his sons." It is perfectly evident that he had some clear consciousness of the power of God. Thus by the creation of different emotions in the hearts of two men, which brought them into co-operation with each other, and thus with His purpose, He moved forward.

Ezra gathered together members of the priestly and royal houses, and a further contingent of the people at Ahava, in order that he might review them, and prepare for the journey. Finding that there were no Levites in the company, he sent to Iddo, and in response to his appeal certain of their number joined him. The character of Ezra is remarkably revealed in his refusing to seek help from an earthly king. It is a fine illustration of the independence and dependence of such as follow the Lord. The king's voluntary gifts were gladly accepted; but to ask for soldiers would have been to make a tacit confession of questioning in his heart as to the ability or willingness of God to help. After a long journey they arrived in safety at Jerusalem, and made their offerings.

Ezra found a condition of affairs at Jerusalem which was a sad revelation of the deterio-

ration of the people. There had been no return to idolatry, but there had been an intermixture with the people of the land, and the chief offenders had been the princes and the rulers. He was moved with righteous indignation, and sank into silent astonishment until the time of the evening oblation. Then before God he poured out his soul in prayer.

The sincerity of Ezra's vicarious repentance produced immediate result. The people who had gathered about him through the long hours of the day came to a consciousness of the enormity of their sin as they saw how he was affected thereby. At last one of their number spoke to him, acknowledging the sin, and suggesting a remedy. He at once became a man of action, first calling them to a sacred covenant that they would put away the evil thing from amongst them; and then leading them in the carrying out of their covenant.

NEHEMIAH

NEHEMIAH—CONSOLIDATION

A
THE BUILDING OF THE WALL
i.—vii. 73a

I. Initiation i., ii.

i. Nehemiah's Grief concerning Jerusalem. i.

ii. Nehemiah's Coming to Jerusalem. ii.

II. Process iii.—v.

i. The Building of the Wall. iii.

ii. Opposition and Persistence. iv.

iii. Internal Difficulties. v.

III. Completion vi.—vii. 73a

i. Opposition and Victory. vi.

ii. The People. vii. 1-73a.

B
THE READING OF THE LAW
vii. 73b—x.

I. The Reading of the Law and Feast of Tabernacles vii. 73b—viii.

i. The Reading of the Law. vii. 73b—viii. 12

ii. The Feast of Tabernacles. 13-18

II. The Great Prayer of the Levites xi.

i. The Day of Humiliation. 1-4

ii. The Offering of Praise. 5-29

iii. Prayer. 30-38

III. The Re-establishment of a Covenant x.

i. The Sealing. 1-28

ii. The Covenant. 29-39

C
THE SETTLEMENT OF THE CITIES
xi.—xiii.

I. The People in Jerusalem xi.—xii. 26

i. The princes and ten per cent. compulsorily, and some voluntarily. xi. 1, 2

ii. Lists. xi. 3—xii. 26

II. The Dedication of the Wall xii. 27—xiii. 3

i. Dating Difficult

ii. Ceremony

a. Two Processions of Singers. xii. 27-47

b. The Reading of the Law. xiii. 1-2

c. Separation. 3

III. Nehemiah's final Reformation xiii. 4-31

i. Twelve years later.

ii. Correction of four Abuses.

iii. His Method (ver. 25).

NEHEMIAH

THIS is the last book of Old Testament history. An interval of about twelve years occurred between the reformation under Ezra and the coming of Nehemiah. The story is that of the continuation of the work commenced by Zerubbabel in the matter of the rebuilding of the wall. The book is intensely interesting, among other reasons because in large measure it is autobiographical. Nehemiah tells his own story, and with a freshness and vigour and transparent honesty which make it for evermore one full of interest. Beyond the account of the building of the wall we have that of a further reformation in which Nehemiah and Ezra were united as leaders, and finally an account of the settlement of the cities.

The book may therefore be divided broadly thus: The Building of the Wall (i.-vii. 73a); The Reading of the Law (vii. 73b-x); The Settlement of the Cities (xi-xiii.).

A. The Building of the Wall

Nehemiah's position as cupbearer at the court of the Gentile king was one of honour,

and admitted him into relationship of some nearness and familiarity. In the midst of these circumstances he had not forgotten his relationship to the chosen people, but on the contrary was interested in them, and made inquiry of those who came to the court concerning Jerusalem. The news they brought was full of sadness, and grief possessed his heart. He carried his burden to God in prayer, asking that He would give him favour in the eyes of the king he served. There was thus evidently in his heart a resolution to do more than pity, if the door of opportunity offered.

The sadness in his heart could not wholly be hidden, and when the king detected it Nehemiah was filled with fear. Through the fear a splendid courage manifested itself, and he asked that he might be allowed to go and help his brethren. The request was granted, and he departed for Jerusalem. Having arrived, he carefully ascertained the true state of affairs, and then called the elders to arise and build. Opposition was at once manifested on the part of surrounding enemies, and with strong determination Nehemiah made it perfectly clear that no co-operation would be permitted with those who were derisive of the effort.

The account of the method of arrangement for the building of the wall shows how system characterized Nehemiah's procedure. The description given takes in the whole city's circumference. The arrangements made indicated the necessity for speedy work, and were characterized by a sense of the importance of division of labour, and a fitting apportionment thereof in the matter of persons and neighbourhoods.

As the work proceeded the opposition of outsiders turned from derision to anger, but rose no higher at the moment than that of contempt. An illuminative sentence, "the people had a mind to work," shows how completely Nehemiah had captured and inspired them, and we are not surprised when we read that the wall was half finished. At this point opposition became more severe, and a positive attempt was made by conspiracy to hinder the progress of the work. In Nehemiah's method there was neither foolish independence of God nor foolhardy neglect of human responsibility. "We made our prayer and set a watch."

A new difficulty arose among the people themselves. The rich had exacted usury from their poorer brethren to such an extent as to oppress and impoverish them. Nehemiah again acted with promptitude. There is a fine

touch in his declaration, "I consulted with myself, and contended with the nobles." Setting an example of self-denial, in that he took no usury, nor even the things which were his right as the appointed governor of the people, he produced immediate results in that all the nobles did the same. Thus the people were relieved, and went forward with their work with new enthusiasm.

Opposition now moved on to a new plane. Having begun in contempt, and proceeded through conspiracy, it now adopted a method of cunning. Affecting friendship, the enemies of Nehemiah four times proposed conference with him, which he resolutely declined. This was followed by an open letter containing a slander. With singular directness he denied the slander, and carried on his building. Finding that he was not to be seduced, they attempted to fill him with fear. This attempt he scorned, and hastened the workers. Through the whole period he was harassed by the complicity of certain nobles with Tobiah.

At last the wall was finished by the setting up of the doors, and the placing in order of porters, singers, and Levites. Arrangements were made for the safety of the city in the presence of surrounding enemies by careful provision as to the hour for opening and clos-

ing the city gates, and by an arrangement of watchers.

B. The Reading of the Law

In this section of the book, Ezra appears upon the scene. A most remarkable religious convention was held. The first day witnessed the assembling of the people, and was given to the reading of the law. This was not merely the reading aloud of passages therefrom, but was reading accompanied by exposition undertaken by men specially appointed to act in conjunction with Ezra. It was a day of conviction, resulting in great sadness in the heart of the people. On the second day a smaller gathering of the rulers was held, who came in order more perfectly to understand the law of God. An immediate application was made by the observance of the feast of tabernacles.

Following the feast, after a brief interval, came the great day of humiliation. The people separated themselves entirely from all that were not actually within the covenant, and gave themselves to confession and humbling before God. In all this they were led by the Levites, and the great prayer they offered is given in full. Its first section was an ascription of praise; its second set forth Jehovah's grace in contrast with the repeated

failure of the people; and the last movement was that of definite seeking for His continued goodness and help.

Following upon the humiliation of the people they entered into new covenant relationships with God. This covenant was sealed representatively by priests, Levites, and rulers. To its terms all the people agreed. They were set forth in general phrases and in particular application. Generally the people promised "to walk in God's law . . . to observe and do all the commandments." Particularly the covenant referred to matters in which the people had been in danger of failure, those namely of intermarriage with the heathen, of neglect of the Sabbath, of Temple maintenance and arrangement, and of the offering of first-fruits and tithes.

c. The Settlement of the Cities

In this third and final division of the book the arrangements made for the settlement of the cities are given. In the first section we have the account particularly of the settlement of Jerusalem. Perhaps not more than fifty thousand had returned from captivity. By no means all of these had come to Jerusalem. Many of them were scattered through the surrounding cities. Jerusalem was peculiarly

difficult of settlement, in that it was the centre of danger and of possible attack. It was therefore arranged that the princes should dwell in the city, and ten per cent. of the people, selected by lot, must take up their abode there. In addition to these there were certain who voluntarily came forward to dwell in the place of danger.

It would seem as though the dedication of the wall had been postponed for some considerable time. The actual time is of no moment. The ceremony of dedication proceeded in three stages—first, two processions of singers who chanted the praises of God; secondly, the reading of the law; and finally, the separation of the mixed multitude from the people of God.

After the building of the wall Nehemiah had evidently gone back to the court of the king. Twelve years later he returned, and the last deeds recorded were such as reveal the contiued strength and loyalty of the man. There were four abuses which confronted him. Eliashib the priest had given place within the very Temple of God to Tobiah. Nehemiah flung out occupant and furniture, and restored the chamber to its proper use. In the second place he found that the Levites, instead of being able to devote their whole time to the service of the Temple, had to earn their living, be-

cause the people neglected the bringing in of the tithe. He corrected this abuse. In the third place he found that the Sabbath was violated, and he restored the Divine order. Finally, the people had again made mixed marriages, and with characteristic roughness and force he dealt with the matter.

ESTHER

ESTHER—GOD AMID THE SHADOWS

A THE KING'S COURT *i.—iii.*	B THE COUNTRY *iv. 1-3*	C THE KING'S COURT *iv. 4—viii.*	D THE COUNTRY *ix.*	CONCLUSION *x.*
I. The Feast at Shushan i.	**I. Mordecai 1-2**	**I. Esther and Mordecai iv. 4-17**	**I. Poetic Retribution 1-19**	**Ahasuerus and Mordecai**
II. The New Queen ii.	**II. The Jews**	**II. Esther and the King v. 1-8**	**II. The Feast of Purim 20-32**	
III. Haman iii.		**III. Haman 9-14**		
		IV. The Sleepless King vi.		
		V. The Queen's Banquet vii.		
		VI. Mordecai viii.		

ESTHER

THE events recorded in the book of Esther occurred between the completion of the Temple and the mission of Ezra (between Ezra vi. and vii.). In all likelihood the narrative, as we have it, was taken directly from the Persian records. This would account for much that has created difficulty in the minds of some as to the presence of this book in the canon of Scripture. The fact that the name of God is not mentioned would be perfectly natural if the historian were a Persian. That many things are chronicled without apology, which are the customs of a godless nation, would also be explained thereby.

All this, however, makes the persons and teaching of the book more valuable. It is a fragment of profane history captured for sacred purposes. The story reveals, to such as have eyes to see, that same principle of the overruling of God on behalf of His people which marks all their history. Here, however, it is seen operating on their behalf in a foreign land.

The principal value of the book is not its

revelation of His care for individuals, though, of course, that also is present. It is rather that of His preservation of the people as a whole, in an hour when they were threatened with wholesale slaughter; and moreover it emphasizes His care even for those who had not returned with Zerubbabel. The feast of Purim, observed even to-day, is the living link to the events recorded, and historically sets the seal upon the accuracy of the story. That feast celebrates, not so much the defeat of Haman, or the advancement of Mordecai, as the deliverance of the people. The book is pre-eminently dramatic, and is best analyzed around the scenes: The King's Court, Ahasuerus (i.-iii.); the Country, Mordecai, and the Mourning Jews (iii.-iv. 3); the King's Court, the unnamed God (iv. 4-viii.); the Country, Purim, the Rejoicing Jews (ix.); Conclusion (x.).

A. The King's Court, Ahasuerus

The first scene presented to us is that of a great feast in the palace of the king. In the midst of it the king commanded his queen, Vashti, to his presence. The one redeeming feature in the revelation of the conditions at the court of Ahasuerus was that of Vashti's refusal to obey the command of the king. She

paid the price of her loyalty to her womanhood in being deposed.

Mordecai's action in the case of Esther is open to question. His love for her was evident, and the picture of him walking before the court of the women's house into which she had been taken indicated his continued interest in her. His advice that she should not betray her nationality was questionable, as her position at the court of the king was one of peril for a daughter of the covenant. Her presence in the palace was part of that process by which the overruling of God preserved His people, and frustrated their foe.

Haman is now introduced, a man haughty and imperious, proud and cruel. His malice was stirred against Mordecai, and also, therefore, against all his people, and he made use of his influence with the king to obtain authority practically to exterminate the whole of them.

B. The Country, Mordecai, and the Mourning Jews

The intention of Haman became known to Mordecai, who at once took up his position outside the king's gate, and there raised a loud and bitter cry. The royal proclamation filled the people through the provinces with sorrow,

and they mourned with fasting and weeping and wailing.

c. The King's Court, the Unnamed God

The news of this mourning reached Esther in the royal palace, and she sent to make inquiries. Thus between the extreme need of her people and the king she became a direct link. The custom and law of the court forbade her approach to her lord save at his command. The urgency of the case appealed to her, however, and with splendid heroism she ventured. Conscious of her need of moral support, she asked that the people would fast with her. There was a note of sacrifice and abandonment in her words, "If I perish, I perish."

Her venture was crowned with success. It might have been quite otherwise, and the graciousness of the king, notwithstanding Esther's violation of the law of the palace, was undoubtedly due to the disposition of that God in Whose hand are the ways of kings, whether they will or not. Her request was at first of the simplest. She invited the king and Haman to a banquet. The overwhelming pride of Haman was manifest in his gathering of his friends, to whom he boasted of his riches, of his advancement, and now of this last fa-

vour, that he alone was invited to accompany the king to the banquet of Esther. Acting upon the advice of wife and friends, he committed the folly of making the time of the banquet merry for himself by first erecting a gallows for Mordecai.

In the economy of God vast issues follow apparently trivial things. In the case of Ahasuerus a sleepless night was the means through which God moved forward for the preservation of His people. To while away its hours, the records were read to the king, and a deed of Mordecai therein recorded led to the hasty and strange happenings which filled the heart of Haman with anger and terror. Mordecai was lifted from obscurity to the most conspicuous position in the kingdom. Events moved rapidly forward. By the way of the banquet Haman passed the gallows. It was a fierce and terrible judgment, and yet characterized by poetic justice.

D. The Country, Purim, the rejoicing Jews

The peril of the Hebrew people was not yet, however, averted. The royal proclamation had gone forth that on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month they should be exterminated. By the constitution no royal proclamation could be reversed. The king granted Morde-

cai to write and sign letters to his people, permitting them to arm and defend themselves. The fateful day arrived, but it was one on which the changed conditions in the case of Haman and Moredcai were repeated throughout the whole of the provinces.

In memory of the deliverance the feast of Purim was established. According to Jewish tradition "all the feasts shall cease in the days of the Messiah, except the feast of Purim." It is a remarkable thing that while there have been breaks in the observance of the other great feasts, and some of them have been practically discontinued, this has been maintained.

Conclusion

Whatever view we may hold of this book of Esther, it is certain that Jewish leaders have treated it as an exposition of the method by which God wrought deliverance for His people in a time of peril, even while they were in exile.

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